

Disclaimer: I do not own any Characters in this story. In the beginning portions of the story I have used exact wording from Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. That book is owned By JK Rowling and various other companies.

This is a story that is a Hermione/Harry Pairing and has some (ok might be a lot) of Ron bashing. If you don't like that, then stop reading now. We might even do some unique Voldemort thwarting but we shall see (well it might still be unique but with over 10,000 stories out there it might have been done before). It is meant to be a plot bunny hatching with humor involved. So feel free to criticize me but really it is just a fictional story that grew in my muse's (hmmm...does my muse have a head it if resides in my brain?) ok, my muse's thoughts.

Read, enjoy, and don't take life or my writing too seriously (or is that Siriusly?)

Chapter 1

Harry Potter was lying in his four poster bed in the Gryffindor tower room he shared with four other boys in his year. One of those boys was his best friend Ron Weasley. Harry was fuming for two reasons. The first being his name had came out of the Goblet of Fire this evening binding him to compete in the highly dangerous Tri-Wizard Tournament; the second was no one would believe him when he told them he didn't enter his name including his so called best friend. Then he thought of his other best friend, Hermione. He hadn't seen her since he left the Gryffindor table once his name was called. She would believe him. He was sure of that. A short time later Harry drifted off to sleep.

The next morning when Harry awoke it took a few moments to remember the events of the previous evening. He ripped back the curtains around his bed and looked over at Ron's bed hoping to talk to him, but he was already gone, probably already headed for breakfast. Harry had hoped he would get chance to talk to Ron this morning. He was positive Ron would see recognize the truth if he would listen. Harry got dressed and went down the spiral staircase. When he entered the common room the people who had already returned from breakfast broke into applause just like they had done last night. The Creevy brothers were motioning for him to join them. After looking around for Ron and Hermione and seeing neither,

Harry bolted out the Portrait hole only to run right into one of the two people he was most desperate to find. Hermione stood there with a stack of toast in a napkin.

"I thought you might like these," Hermione said holding out the toast, "instead of going to the Great Hall this morning."

"Thanks Hermione." Harry said gratefully. "You're the best."

"Want to go for a walk?" Hermione asked.

"That's a great idea." Harry replied

Soon they were striding across the lawn headed toward the lake. Harry started to tell Hermione all that happened after he left the table the previous evening including Professor Moody's suggestion that someone was out to kill Harry. He was immensely relieved when Hermione accepted his story without question.

"Of course I knew you hadn't done it Harry." Hermione said. "The look on your face when Dumbledore called out your name told me that instantly."

"Have you seen Ron?" Harry asked.

"Uh, yeah. He was at breakfast." Hermione said.

"Does he still think I entered my name?" He asked.

"I don't think so...not really."

"Not really..what does that mean?"

"Oh Harry, isn't it obvious?" Hermione said despairingly, "He's jealous."

"Jealous?" Harry said incredulously. "Like I want to make a fool of myself in front of the entire school."

"I know that Harry." Hermione said patiently. "But look at it from his point of view. It is always you who seems to get all the breaks. You're famous...and well he has all of his brothers he tries to compete with and..."

"So he's willing to throw away our friendship over a petty jealousy?" Harry asked.

"I think it was just the last straw." Hermione said quietly. "But I'm sure he will come around sooner or later."

"I don't even want to be in this competition. I mean I didn't put my name in the cup, how can I be magically bound to risk my life?" Harry asked. "Do you know anything about magical contracts? I want to know if I really have to compete."

"Not really Harry, but.."

"We can go to the library." They finished together and Harry felt a smile arise for the first time since last night. "No matter what I can always count on Hermione." He thought.

Thirty minutes later Hermione and Harry had several books on contracts spread out over three different tables in the library. Hermione also found a couple of history books that dealt with Tri-Wizard Tournaments.

After a couple of hours or so, Hermione slammed a book closed "This is useless, basically once you are engaged in a magical contract it must be carried out. Whoever designed the stupid Goblet's contract entry is at fault here. Whoever heard of a name written on a piece of paper being the sole requirement?" At that she picked up one of the books on Tri-Wizard tournament. As she turned a page her brow furrowed as she unconsciously tucked her hair behind her ear. Harry found himself staring at his best friend and from the depth of his teenage brain came "She really is beautiful when she does that."

"Beautiful? Hermione? Where did that come from? I mean..." Harry's thoughts were cut off when Cho Chang walked into the library and stopped at Madam Pince's desk which was right behind Hermione. Harry teenage brain started comparing Cho and Hermione. Harry had always thought Cho Chang was the most beautiful girl in the castle, but seeing these two young ladies in comparison, he realized that Hermione had moved past the bushy haired girl from first year. Cho could be said to be more true beautiful, but Hermione was very pretty in her own way. Harry's eyes

moved to the ear, Hermione had tucked the hair behind. It was a beautiful ear...

"Harry, what are you staring at?" Hermione's voice cut into his musing.

"Uh...nothing, I mean I was just thinking" Harry said quickly as his face turned a bright red.

"Well I found something here." Hermione started, "It seems in 1365 a champion named a replacement champion...oh wait, sorry you have to be unable to compete to do that." Hermione once again moved her hand back to subconsciously move her hair behind her ear again as she went back to reading and once again Harry found himself staring at her ear, but this time his eyes wandered from her ear to her lips and his teenage brain started wondering what it would be like to kiss his best friend.

"Kiss Hermione?" Harry asked himself, "But, but she's my best friend and..and.. she's a very beautiful young woman." Harry's brain kept arguing with itself as he kept staring at Hermione's lips.

Hermione looked up from her reading to make a comment only to find her best friend eyes glued upon her. She found herself looking into Harry's green eyes, his mesmerizing deep green eyes. She found herself wanting to get lost in his eyes every chance she could. It was only after they were staring at each other for several seconds before they realized what they were doing, and each turned away with the cheeks blushing madly.

"I'm sorry Harry, I don't think you can get out of the contract." Hermione said. "I mean it's a stupid magical contract but it is a magical contract."

The two of them started putting the books back on the shelf, as Hermione was putting one of the last books away it dropped onto the floor. They both reach down for it and as Harry picked it up and handed it to her, he found himself only inches away from those lips he had been staring at earlier.

Hermione had bent to pick up the book she had dropped only to have Harry beat her to it, when they both stood back up she found Harry looking strangely at her. Those green eyes were staring at her

and they were only inches from her. She felt her heart start beating faster...

Harry found his heart beating faster, he could feel her closeness, her lips so close his brain shut down as pure instinct took over and he found his lips touching hers ever so softly.

Hermione couldn't move, Harry was so close, those eyes staring, then his face closed the small distance between them, his lips touched hers, this caused an immediate brain shut down, her eyes closed and she melted into her best friend's kiss.

It was several seconds before the kiss ended and the two friends looked at each other.

"Oh Hermione, I...I am so sorry. I didn't mean, I mean..." Harry sputtered.

Hermione just stood there looking at Harry. Her first kiss had been incredible. Her brain that normally had an answer for everything still couldn't fathom what just happened. Her best friend had just kissed her and it was the single most blissful experience she had ever experienced and she had no answer to what to do now.

"Let's just forget it, Hermione. I didn't mean to. It just happened." Harry continued to sputter concerned he had just lost his best friend.

At those words Hermione's brain snapped back into focus. "No Harry we need to talk about."

"But Hermione.."

"You're still my best friend Harry, but we can't just ignore this." Hermione said and drug Harry back to a table in the deep recesses of the library. When they were seated, she started. "Ok, let's be honest with each other. We clear up what happened and then move on, ok?"

Harry just nodded as he continued to blush.

"Did the kiss have anything to do with you staring earlier?" Hermione asked.

Harry's face turned back red as he drew in a deep breath and said "I guess."

"What were you staring at?" Hermione asked,

"Uh..Do you really want me to answer this? You might not like the answer."

"Yes Harry I do." Hermione said "I think we need to be totally honest here. I promise no matter what, you will be my best friend. I mean after all we have been through do you think this will keep us apart?"

"Well I was sort of staring at you." Harry said.

"Why were you staring at me?"

"Uh, well, I...I mean, Uh Cho walked into the Library earlier and well I was..Oh never mind Hermione you don't want to hear this." Harry said and started to get up.

Hermione put her hand on his, "Harry please. If we leave it here, it will be awkward for us and I really don't want that. I promise no matter what you say, it's alright. But we have to clear this up."

Harry sat back down heavily. "Ok" he said. "You know I have always thought Cho was pretty?"

Hermione nodded.

"Well when she came in, she was standing right behind you, and well, uh, when I was looking at the two of you together, I uh, I realized you were as pretty as she is and I, well, I found myself staring at you." Harry said as he looked down at the table.

This was the last thing Hermione had expected. She knew Harry thought Cho was pretty. The Black haired Ravenclaw was considered to be one of the most beautiful girls in the castle. She was sure Harry would eventually get up the courage and ask her out and of course since it was Harry Potter Boy-Who-Lived, she would definitely say yes. But Harry thought she, Hermione, the bushy haired, buck toothed know it all was pretty? She just stared at Harry for a couple of minutes causing him to blush even more.

"Harry, you don't have to say things like that." Hermione said "I know I'm not pretty. Between my hair and my teeth I doubt anyone will ever think that I am nice to look at."

Harry looked up at her in disbelief. "Hermione, I'm already mad at Ron for not believing I didn't lie. Don't make me mad at you." Harry's ire overcame his overwhelming shyness. "I do think you are the smartest and one of the nicest and most beautiful girls in this castle. Any boy who doesn't think so is a fool. Personally if I thought I had a chance in the world at being your boyfriend I would ask you in an instant." Harry realized what he had just said and the blush upon his face raced to his ears and down his neck as well.

Hermione could feel the sincerity in his voice, and her lips were still tingling from the taste of his upon her. "Harry, do you really mean that? Not just trying to make me feel better? I mean about the boyfriend thing?"

Harry looked up into brown eyes that belonged to his best friend. "Yes I do."

"I, I think you would have every chance Harry."

"Wha...what? Harry stammered.

She once again was looking into those green eyes. She delved into herself for the courage she needed and hoping that she was doing the right thing. "I think you would have every chance to be my boyfriend. That is if you really want to be."

Harry felt his heart start beating so rapidly that it must surely burst out of his chest and land on the table in front of him. "Hermione Granger, would you be my girlfriend?"

"Only if you promise to kiss me like you did earlier, Mr. Potter." Hermione said.

"Just once?" Harry asked giving her a grin.

"Well you know me and my planner. I will see if I can fit you in some other time." And the two of them found themselves laughing, and then found themselves kissing once more.

As they eventually found themselves leaving the library they both remembered a serious issue with their relationship at the same time. "RON!" They said simultaneously.

Harry found himself leaning against the wall right outside of the library. "He's never going to let this go is he? I mean the tournament and the prettiest girl in school?"

Hermione was biting her lower lip obviously thinking. "Harry, did you mean it when you said you didn't want to compete in the tournament?"

Harry realized just how much her biting her lower lip made him really want to kiss her again, "Hermione, I just wanted a normal year this year. And now I definitely would prefer to spend my time with you, instead of worrying about being killed in a competition I have no chance of winning."

"Well if that's the case, how about if we let Ron compete for you?" Hermione asked. "That way he gets the tournament and you get the girl."

"But the magical contract, how -"

"Do you trust me Harry?" Hermione asked looking at him questioningly.

"There is no one in the world I trust more." Harry replied.

Hermione smile lit up the corridor, "What if it causes you pain?"

Harry looked at the young lady in front of him and considered, "You really are scary you know." He said smiling. "Now just what do you have in mind?"

"Well you remember when I said the Champion in 1365 named a replacement when he wasn't able to compete?" Hermione asked.

"Yeah."

"Well, we just need to make sure you aren't able to compete, now don't we?" She asked with a smile.

"But how? I mean anything except Death, Madam Pomfrey can fix before the night is over it seems." Harry said.

Hermione kissed her boyfriend lightly on the lips. "You leave that to me. Now that you are mine, I don't plan on risking you in this tournament. But do you think we can keep us," She motioned between them "a secret for a couple of days. I think we need to approach Ron with the tournament offer at the same time we tell him about us."

"But what do you need a couple of days for?"

"Well I want you to sweat on exactly how I plan on hurting you." Then seeing the look in his eyes, "Relax my boyfriend, I just want a copy of the Tri-Wizard rules to make sure the replacement rule is still in there. I would hate to cause you pain for nothing. I'm going to send an Owl to Percy to get an official copy. I also need to check on a Hogwarts medical rule that I remember reading."

The next two days were brutal. Ron was ignoring Harry so Harry was spending all of his time with Hermione but they couldn't express their new relationship they wanted too. Though Harry did find himself walking around with a smile on his face constantly. When Hermione was close his hand wanted to reach out and take hers, but he had to wait until it was time. Two days after the library, she practically dragged him to an empty classroom after dinner. After a serious get reacquainted kiss she got to the point.

"Ok, the rule is definitely still in the contract." Hermione said "As it reads, Any Champion who after being selected and before the first event occurs becomes physically unable to compete must name a replacement Champion of his or her own choosing. Once the replacement Champion is accepted in the tournament, the original Champion is considered legally excused from the tournament."

"You're brilliant Hermione." Harry said.

"Thank you, but now comes the hard part." Hermione said. "We need to get you physically unable to compete. I first thought I was going to have to find a serious hex that would be incurable for a while. But I think all you have to do is break your arm or leg."

"But Madam Pomfrey can fix a broken bone in an instant." Harry said. "She's grew every bone in my arm in less than a day before."

"I know that Harry." Hermione said slightly cross. "But what you don't know is that Muggle born and Muggle RAISED children are allowed to request Muggle based medical treatment in lieu of magical healing. In this case your arm or leg would be in a cast for several weeks taking it past the first task."

"Uh.."

"Yes I know, Malfoy." Hermione said.

"Ok, that was really scary, I just said Uh and you knew what I was going to say." Harry said.

"Of course." Hermione smiled at Harry. "I've been keeping you out of trouble for years so I've learned most of your monosyllabic verbal tendencies."

"Uh, ok." Harry said.

"Now Malfoy is going to start saying you're injured just to get out of the tournament, but it's a no win situation either way. If you compete, he's going to say you faked your way into the tournament and try to turn the whole castle against you." Hermione said. "But I think this way, it will blow over as soon as the first event is over and you are out of your cast."

"I hope so." Harry said. "All I need is a yearful of Malfoy."

"Ok, well I was thinking that we can have an accident while practicing banishing charms." Hermione suggested.

"But we haven't done banishing charms yet." Harry said.

"It's in this year's lesson Harry." Hermione said.

"So?" Then it hit him, "Oh, you already know the spell don't you? You read your charms book over the summer."

"And so should you, Harry." Hermione said. "We are going to have to work on your summer studying." Then seeing the look of panic in

Harry's eyes she gave him another kiss that settled him down. "Don't worry, I promise we will work on a compromise that works for both of us. Especially if we base it on a reward system."

"What type of reward?" Harry asked.

"Well presuming you are still wanting me as your girlfriend by the summertime, I could imagine kisses could be incorporated into such a system." She then promptly gave him a prime example of the type of reward he would be offered. The kiss left him with a very glassy eyed look. Hermione found this new found power over Harry to be quite exhilarating.

"Ok, now banishing charms, it would probably be a good thing if you learn them or at least know what they are so the injury looks genuine." Hermione said. She spent the next two hours teaching Harry how to do the charm. He finally got it when she threatened to not let him kiss her again until he could banish the pillow she had brought for this purpose across the room.

"I definitely like your reward system much better than detentions with Snape." Harry said smiling at her which caused her to blush.

"Ok Harry, now that you have the banishing charm down, we need for us to have an accident." Hermione reached into her book bag and brought out a large tome. "Ok, I am going to banish this into your left arm Harry, that way you are still have your wand arm."

"Can I have another kiss for the pain?" Harry asked.

"But it doesn't hurt yet."

"Ok, for the pre-pain then." Harry said with a smile.

"Then you're going to want one for the actual pain and another for the post pain, I presume?" Hermione said.

"Actually I was thinking of much more than one for the actual pain." Harry smirked. "I mean, you're going to feel awfully guilty since you're causing it."

Hermione started thinking how in only two days Harry was getting more and more self confident in his attitude toward her and their

relationship even without them being able to show it. Though she liked it, she was also worried that the self confidence would mean he wouldn't want her any more. If he lost that shyness, he could have any girl in the castle.

"It's not going to happen you know." Harry said.

"What isn't?" Hermione asked.

"Me not wanting you." Harry said.

"But...how?"

"I've been getting you into trouble for three years; don't you think I know your looks of self doubt." Harry said. "I might have been stupid not to see what was in front of me until now. But even I know a treasure when I find it. Now give me my kiss and then break my arm so within a couple of days I can kiss you in the Great Hall in front of everyone."

The thought of him kissing her in front of the whole school sent shivers down her spine and butterflies into her stomach and it was at that moment she knew he really did want her. She gave him his kiss, and moved back away to the other side of the room. Harry gritted his teeth and with a Depulso the large book shot across the room and slammed into Harry's arm right below the Elbow. The crack was audible as the bone snapped. Harry only grimaced as the pain shot up his nerves letting his brain know serious damage had been done to his arm.

"Ok, I really want a kiss for the pain now. It hurts." Harry said.

It was five minutes later that they entered the Hospital wing and found Madame Pomfrey.

Hope you enjoyed Chapter 1. Stay tuned for the next installment of this plot Bunny story.

Chapter 2

Madam Pomfrey was relaxing in her office reading the latest edition of Magical Medical Journal when she felt the wards on the doors to the medical wing trip letting her know that someone needed her attention. When she came out of her office and saw Harry Potter with his arm dangling by his side she just let out a sigh. "Mr. Potter what happened this time?" She inquired.

"We were practicing Banishing Charms Madam Pomfrey to help Harry with the Tournament, and I accidentally hit him with a book and broke his arm." Hermione explained.

"Very well. Have a seat on that bed," She nodded toward the bed that Harry always seemed to end up in whenever he came to the Hospital wing, "and I will have you fixed up in a jiffy."

"Uh, Madam Pomfrey," Harry started, then he continued with the sentence Hermione had drilled into his head, "per the annex to the Hogwarts medical charter concerning non-magically raised student, I request that my injury be healed in a non-magical manner."

Madam Pomfrey was no fool. She had been a Ravenclaw followed by tops in her medical training. Though she was first taken back by the request since she had magically healed more bones for Harry Potter than the rest of the student body put together, it only took her a couple of seconds to put the pieces together and realize what was happening. "Very well Mr. Potter. May I perform a magical diagnosis to the extent of the damage?"

Harry looked at his girlfriend who thought for a couple of seconds to make sure this would not lead to any complications and after she gave him a little nod he said, "That will be fine."

Madam Pomfrey ran her wand over Harry's arm and then she touched the wand to a piece of parchment where words appeared. After reading the diagnosis, she said "A clean break, but you are probably in a lot of pain I presume. Can I offer you a pain potion or would you prefer a non-magical pain medication?"

Again Harry looked over at Hermione who shook her head slightly, "Non-Magical please Madam Pomfrey."

"Give me a few minutes to prepare your treatment Mr. Potter. As this is an unusual request I do not have the required supplies readily available and must secure them." and with those words Madam Pomfrey disappeared into her office. In this case she had told a little white lie to Harry Potter. The non-magical supplies were available but she wanted a little time to research something. She opened the door to the library connected to her office. If anyone were to look at Madam Pomfrey's personal library they would swear she was the darkest witch to ever walk the face of the earth. She had tomes describing curses that even the thought of their effects would make most witches or wizards lose any stomach content they may possess at the time. Madam Pomfrey knew she had to understand all of these hexes and curses so she could identify, counter and treat them as she encountered them in her profession. In this particular case though she was looking for a book that wasn't particularly dark, but wasn't something found in the Hogwarts' general library either. After a couple of minutes she found the book in question and verified the spell and the required treatment of the spell being performed incorrectly. "This should work." She thought to herself and taking the book, and the non-magical healing supplies she returned to Harry and Hermione.

It was only 20 minutes later that Harry had been administered the Non-magical pain medication; the arm had been set and a cast had been applied to his arm.

"Now that is all done, may I suggest a different explanation to you two?" Madam Pomfrey stated with a smile.

"Wha..what do you mean different explanation?" Hermione stammered.

"You don't think I know exactly what is going on here do you?" Madam Pomfrey said. "Personally I am wholeheartedly in favor of it. There is no way Harry should be in the tournament."

It took a minute for her words to sink in and Hermione let out a sigh, "So you're not going to say anything to Professor Dumbledore?"

"Oh if he requests, I am required to provide the explanation behind any medical treatment, which is why I am suggesting a different explanation." Madam Pomfrey said and then turning to a page in the book she had brought from her library, she pointed out a particular

spell, "Now this particular spell is something that Miss Granger could have come across in her endless education pursuits. And no one would ever doubt that you Mr. Potter would attempt it if she suggested it." Madam Pomfrey smiled at them. "Now if you will notice the ramifications of the spell going awry and what the healing procedures entailed, you will see that it will more readily explain the non-magical remedy to the broken arm."

Hermione looked over the spell and other information and saw that it was indeed a much better solution. "Were you by any chance a Slytherin Madam Pomfrey?" Hermione asked.

"Oh goodness no, I was a Ravenclaw my dear, but I might have dated a Slytherin at one time or another." She said with a smile.

It took several minutes for the three of them to get the entire explanation down. Since Harry was a horrible liar and was out of his depth in explaining the spell anyway, it was agreed he would just cite the injury happened because of "complications from tournament preparation". Hermione would explain if anything further was required. Madam Pomfrey told them she would notify the Headmaster the next morning of the injury and to expect a summons to his office.

"Do you know who you're going to ask to be your replacement Champion Harry?" Madam Pomfrey asked.

"I am going to offer it to Ron." Harry replied.

"Ron Weasley?" Poppy asked and when Harry nodded, she became ashen faced and said, "Well I better go double check my medical supplies." And as she walked away they heard her muttering, "Got to double my supply of burn ointment and better get a reverse drowning potion brewing..."

It was late by the time they made it to the common room. Harry and Hermione were happy to see that Ron wasn't there since they wanted to wait until after the meeting with Dumbledore before bringing up the issue with Ron. Several Gryffindors were still awake and questioned Harry about his injury. Colin Creevy recognized the cast for what it was, but several of the others wanted to know what the hard thing around his arm was and why Madam Pomfrey hadn't just fixed his arm right away. Harry cited that "complications from

tournament preparations prevented it" and they left it at that. After a while he finally got away and headed up to his Dorm.

Ron was sitting on his bed when Harry entered the room. He glanced up when he saw Harry and was about to look away when he saw the cast and sling around Harry's arm. "What's wrong with your arm?" He Sneered.

"Uh, I broke it. I...I was preparing for the..well you know, and it got broken." Harry replied. "This is a non-magical way to heal it."

"And why didn't Madam Pomfrey fix it?" Ron continued to sneer.

Harry felt his anger rising, but forced it back down. Now wasn't the time. He just needed to wait until tomorrow. "She couldn't. Complications due to something else prevented it."

"Yeah right, you're just trying to get more sympathy from everyone." And with that Ron pulled his curtains closed.

"Fine" Harry thought.

The summons to the Headmaster's office happened shortly after breakfast. When Professor McGonagall made the request for Harry to go to Professor Dumbledore's office, he insisted that Hermione be allowed to go as well. Fifteen minutes later the two of them were standing in front of the Headmaster's desk.

"Good morning Harry, Miss Granger." Dumbledore started.

"Good morning sir." Harry and Hermione responded together.

"I understand you had an interesting night. Care to explain?" The headmaster asked.

"Well sir..." Harry started.

"It was all might fault sir," Hermione jumped in. "I insisted that we try that spell. I thought it was the only way he would have a chance in the tournament. I mean really he's only a fourth year and he's going against seventh years."

Harry looked at his girlfriend, thinking back three years and heard another lie in his mind "I went looking for the troll because...." He smiled at how easily she could maneuver through a story without a hesitation.

"But the Amplio Magus spell is a very dangerous spell. You could have suffered far worse damage than you did Harry." Dumbledore said reading the scroll Madam Pomfrey had brought to him at first light this morning. "Where did you learn about that spell?"

They were, of course expecting that question and Hermione quoted the book that Madam Pomfrey had shown it to them in. "It was something I picked up used in Flourish and Blotts over the summer." Hermione continued the falsehood.

"Well fortunately it looks like Madam Pomfrey was able to stabilize Harry and there will be no permanent damage, but it looks like you aren't going to be able to continue in the Tournament Harry."

"I'm sorry sir. As I said when it happened I didn't put my name in the goblet, but I was actually starting to enjoy the idea of competing." Harry said trying to keep the grin off his face.

"Now according to the rules you will need to name a replacement champion." The headmaster said.

"I will sir?" Harry asked trying to sound surprised.

"Yes Harry. I suggest you start thinking about who you might ask." Dumbledore said. "I will make an announcement concerning your status this evening at dinner. The sooner you name your replacement, the sooner they can start preparing for the first event. It is less than three weeks away."

"Uh yes sir. I will start thinking about it right now."

"Very well. Go on and enjoy your breakfast."

When Harry and Hermione left the Headmaster's office they couldn't help but look at each other and grin.

"Hermione, you are the most brilliant, most beautiful and most scary witch I know. In other words, you are perfect." Harry said bringing a blush to Hermione's cheeks along with a huge smile.

The rest of the morning was horrible for Harry. He was questioned repeatedly about his arm and he started sounding like a broken record in his "issue with preparing for the Tournament" response. After lunch they finally cornered Ron in the Gryffindor Common room. When they came in from the corridor he had tried to get up and leave, but Hermione hit him with a leg locking hex causing him to fall flat on his face.

"OK Ron" Harry started, "I have something I want to ask you. I think you will like it, now either you can listen while lying there or we can sit on the much more comfortable chairs."

Ron had a look of either fear or hunger in his eyes; Harry had never been able to tell the two looks apart, but finally agreed to listen. Harry nodded at Hermione performed the counter curse and Ron's legs came free.

Ron looked toward the portrait hole and then at the stairs measuring the distance to each wondering if he a chance to run for it. Then realizing he didn't, he sat down in the chair. "What do you want Potter?" He spat in a near perfect Draco like imitation.

"Simple, I want to know if you would like to be a Tri-Wizard Champion?" Harry said. "Because of my injury, I am no longer fit to compete. Per the rules I can name my replacement Champion. Now if you would stop being an arse long enough I might consider you for it."

Ron's face looked like Christmas, two birthdays and the end of the school year feast were all happening at the same time. "Champion? Me?" Then he got a look of suspicion and started looking around. "Did the Fred and George put you up to this? Where are they?"

"This isn't a joke Ron." Harry said. "I am injured. Professor Dumbledore will make an announcement this evening at dinner."

"But why me?"

"You're my best friend, or least you were. I told you I didn't want to do it and now that I am injured and can't, I thought I would let you have a crack at it." Harry said. "So are you interested?"

Ron's eyes glassed over as he already imagined the Tri-Wizard cup and the thousand galleons in his hand. "Yeah."

"Well there is one thing I ask in return Ron. It's actually pretty simple." Harry said.

Ron continued with his glassy eyes not responding.

"Ron...RON!" Harry finally yelled.

"Wh..what."

"I have one thing I ask in return if I name you champion." Harry repeated himself.

"Anything, and I mean anything Harry." Ron replied.

Harry had a thought of having Ron ask Millicent Bulstrode to a Hogsmeade trip, but decided Hermione was too important. "Well Hermione and I" Harry glanced over at his girlfriend who was looking nervous, "are seeing each other now and all I ask is for you not to be jealous of us."

"That's it? That's all I have to do?" Ron exclaimed. "Why would I care about that? I mean as a Champion I can date any girl I want. I bet even that Veela girl will go out with me."

Hermione just rolled her eyes, and then she reached into her bag and brought out a sheet of parchment. "In that case Ron," she said. "Will you sign this? It just says you will not be jealous of Harry and I and you promise to participate in the tournament if Harry names you champion." Harry looked questioning at Hermione. She hadn't mentioned anything about a contract.

Ron turned to Harry and snorted, "Only Hermione would make a non-jealousy contract." He grabbed the Quill and signed his name with a great flourish.

"I'm going to be a Champion; I'm going to be a Champion...." Ron was singing to himself, something Harry and Hermione was glad he didn't do very often since the sound reminding them of the music played at Sir Nicholas's Deathday party.

"Ron, you can't tell anyone until Harry names you this evening, Ok?" Hermione said to Ron.

"What..But.." Ron sputtered. "Why not?"

"Wait for it to be official, that way you get all the attention of the Great Hall. Everyone will see Ron Weasley announced Champion." Harry said.

"Oh Yeah..." and the glassy eye look reappeared on Ron's face.

Once they had left the common room Harry turned to Hermione "What was with the thing you had Ron sign?"

"Well I just wanted something that we can use to remind him and, well..." Hermione's voice trailed off.

"Why do I have a feeling it was more than that?" Harry asked.

"Well, I wanted a way to know if he was jealous Harry." Hermione said.

"And how does him signing that contract let you know that?" Harry asked

"I well I jinxed the parchment so if he does get jealous, he.." Hermione sighed. "He will produce flatulence."

It took a couple of seconds for Harry to register what exactly she had just said. "So he will...fart every time he gets jealous of us?"

"Well yeah, I still had some anger issues with him when I made it with the way he was ignoring you." Hermione said. "But you heard him; he's going to be dating every girl he wants now. He won't be jealous of us."

Harry was still getting his mind around what Hermione had done. He felt a tremor in his stomach which turned into a chuckle, and then

the chuckle turned into a full side splitting, rolling on the floor, tears to the eyes laughter. When he finally got back a hold of himself, Harry turned to Hermione. "Hermione, I promise you I will never, ever, ever break up with you."

Hermione looked at Harry, "Why do you say that?"

"Do you think I would ever want you mad at me?" Harry grinned at her and she could see the mirth in his eyes. "Now you wouldn't happen to have a kiss for your boyfriend would you?"

"Well I just might at that, Mr. Potter. " She said and then gave him what he had requested.

That evening when the evening meal was about to begin, Professor Dumbledore rose from his chair and asked for silence.

"I need to make an announcement concerning the Tri-Wizard Tournament." He began. "Last night, Mr. Potter was engaging in a highly dangerous spell to aid in preparations for the tournament and suffered a serious injury." Murmurs started throughout the hall and eyes everywhere turned to his direction. Harry just stared directly at Professor Dumbledore while trying to not to grin at Madam Pomfrey. "I will not mention the spell since I would prefer other student not end up in the Hospital wing as well. The spell was miscast causing his magical core to become unstable. I know many of you have noticed Mr. Potter is currently being treated in a non-magical fashion for a broken arm which he sustained in a different tournament preparation action. This was required since with Mr. Potter's core being unstable, Madam Pomfrey felt it unsafe to treat his injury magically." Dumbledore turned and smiled at the school nurse. "She has assured me that Mr. Potter will make a full recovery. At this time let's congratulate Mr. Potter on his determination to excel against overwhelming odds in the Tri-Wizard Tournament." Not many people rose to accompany Dumbledore in the congratulations since they still thought Harry had cheated to get into the tournament. "Unfortunately due to Mr. Potter's injuries, he will no longer be able to compete as a Champion." At that news, the murmuring broke out into louder chatter as all the eyes once again became glued to Harry. "By the rules of the Tournament, Mr. Potter must select his replacement." Several people who had put their names in the Goblet the first time started trying to catch Harry's eyes.

Harry stood up and addressed the Headmaster, "Sir, I have already made my decision on my replacement."

"Very well." Professor Dumbledore raised his wand and with a wave, the goblet of fire appeared in front of him. He turned to the school nurse. "Poppy, since the Goblet of Fire can only be re-ignited for a medical reason you must do it."

"Of course Headmaster." Madam Pomfrey pulled her wand and spoke the required incantations and the dancing white blue flames re-appeared in it.

"Harry, I will need you to write your name on a piece of parchment, cross it out with a single line and then write the name of your replacement Champion underneath it." Professor Dumbledore said.

"Yes sir." Harry said. He looked over at Ron who looked like he was going to wet his pants in glee and smiled at him. Hermione handed him the parchment and he quickly wrote his name, cross it out and then wrote Ronald Weasley on the parchment.

"Now bring it up here and drop it in the Goblet." Professor Dumbledore said.

"Come with me." Harry said to Hermione.

"Why?"

"Just come with me please."

Hermione looked into his emerald green eyes and couldn't refuse him. "Ok."

Professor Moody was staring at Harry Potter. His magical eye was examining the arm of the young wizard. He could definitely see the break in the arm through the cast. The only thought that came to his mind was "Oh shit, how do I tell my master that his brilliant plan lies in ruins because of Harry Potter?"

Harry and Hermione walked to the raised table and Harry dropped the parchment into the Goblet. The goblet's fire turned red, a tongue of flame flew out of the goblet and the charred piece of parchment came floating down. Dumbledore caught it and then after looking at

it, he glance at Harry and then turning back to the Great Hall he spoke. "The Champion's Champion of the Tri-Wizard tournament is Ronald Weasley."

Ron shot out of his chair to accept the acclamations he knew was coming to him. This was his time, the time he stepped out of Harry Potter's shadow, the time the world could see how great he, Ron Weasley could and would be. A couple of people started to clap, Ron wanted to make sure everyone could see him so he hopped onto the bench and closed his eyes and stretched out his hands as he waited for the rest of the acknowledgment to follow. And it came, the applause started slowly, and grew and grew, whistles and shouts were ringing throughout the Great Hall and it kept going and going. Finally Ron opened his eyes ready to take his bow, to thank his admirers for their show of support but when he looked up he noticed something was very wrong. Nobody was looking at him. All the people applauding and whistling were looking toward the front table. He also noticed a lot of the witches were glaring in the same direction, as Ron glanced that way he saw what everyone was applauding. Harry had chosen that moment to fulfill the promise that he would kiss Hermione in front of everyone in the Great Hall. The two of them were locked into a kiss for all eternity. Their eyes were closed and they were lost to the world, not hearing anyone, not feeling anyone, just lost in each other's lips.

"PPPPPPWWWWWT TTTT TTTTPPPPP PPPPPWWWWWT TTTTPPPPP
TTTTPPPPPWWWWWT TTTTPPPPPPP"

Echoed around the hall eclipsing the sound of the applause and whistling. The noise generated brought everyone's attention fully back to Ron Weasley, Tri-Wizard Champion.

a while they were engaged in their act of osculation. They had been lost in their own world bereft of all other senses except the feeling of each other's lips. That moment of absolute perfection was lost when a loud noise had reverberated throughout the hall. Looking back at the students in the Great Hall, they saw everyone was staring in the direction of Ron who was standing up on his seat. Harry and Hermione saw their friend's face turn a color of red that every Gryffindor in the Hall would be proud of, except those immediately surrounding Ron who were struggling to breathe at the moment.

Ron stepped down from his seat, filled his plate with more food and grabbing his cup he stormed out of the Hall.

"I think he might have been a little jealous." Harry whispered to Hermione.

"Possibly, but it is Ron, so we can't jump to conclusions."

Harry put his arm around Hermione's waist and led her back to the Gryffindor table where several sixth and seventh years were trying to perform air freshening charms. None of which seemed to be able to cut through the smell. Finally Professors Dumbledore and McGonagall had to come down to finish the air cleaning.

"Couldn't you have used a non-smelling jinx on that contract?" Harry whispered to Hermione.

"The jinx only creates the flatulence out of what is in his digestive tract. Merlin knows he eats anything put in front of him." Hermione whispered back.

"Oh crap." Harry whispered looking very stricken with a sudden thought.

"What?"

"You don't have to share a dorm with him." Harry whispered imagining night after night of similar smells.

"Let's hope he gets over it soon." Hermione said.

"Think I should go talk to him? Make sure he's alright." Harry asked.

"Well he is probably jealous and embarrassed, so you might make it worse." Hermione replied.

"Ok, I'll try later or in the morning." Harry said.

"Well it's about time." Came the simultaneous words of the Weasley twins who came over to them.

"About time for what?" Harry asked.

"For you two, of course, though if you could have waited until Christmas, Fred and I would have made a killing." George said.

"Killing? What do you mean?" Hermione asked.

"Why in Angelina's pool for when you two would finally figure it out?" Fred said then looking down the table. "Hey Angelina, who won it?"

"Uh.. Professor McGonagall did." Angelina said as she looked at a scroll.

"You were betting on when we would get together?" Hermione asked.

"No, of course not Hermione. We would never do that." George said smiling "You've been together forever. We were betting on when you would realize it."

Hermione noticed one person in particular at the Gryffindor table who was staring at her and not smiling. If looks could kill, Ginny Weasley had Avada Kedavras blazing out of her eyes directly at Hermione. Hermione just smiled at her female friend and then taking Harry's arm she leaned her head on his shoulder. Harry subconsciously put his arm around her and held her a little closer. That caused the youngest Weasley to storm out of the Great Hall also. Hermione thought between the red hair and the steam that could almost be seen coming out of her ears, Ginny reminded her of the Hogwarts Express at that moment.

Harry hadn't noticed Ginny and was still chatting with the twins. "What do you mean we have been together forever? I..I mean..I liked other people."

"Ah yes, the lovely young Miss Chang I do believe." George said looking over at the Ravenclaw table where the said person was also not particularly happy at the moment as she too was glaring at Hermione. "She never had a chance. You two have been inseparable since your first year. If you two hadn't realized it by Christmas, Fred and I had a few plans in mind to help us win the pool."

"Professor McGonagall actually wagered on us?" Hermione asked in disbelief. She turned and looked at the deputy Headmistress and could have sworn the stern professor almost smiled at her favorite student.

"Of course, and so did Professor Flitwick. Professor Trelawney wanted to bet that you would declare your love over Harry's grave." Fred said. "But Angelina required her to give a specific date. Trelawney only stormed off muttering that the secrets of the future couldn't be wasted on a few galleons pool."

Harry was now desperate to get off the topic, and he remembered something else. "Guys, you're not mad at me for not choosing one of you as Champion are you? I know you wanted to enter."

Fred's grin turned into a large smile, as he said to George, "He thinks we would be mad at him?"

"He gives us one of the greatest gifts imaginable, and thinks we would be upset?" George responded to his brother with a glint in his eye.

"Gift? What do you mean?" Harry asked nervously. When the twins responded with this much happiness someone was in immediate danger of a prank.

"Obviously he doesn't understand dear brother." Fred said.

"Then we should enlighten him, oh most honored brother." George responded then turning back to Harry "This year was not shaping up to be much fun."

"No Quidditch, and ever since those other school arrived."

"Filch and the Professors have been watching us very closely."

"Of course the best pranks would be against"

"The tri-wizard Champions."

"But we weren't going to prank you Harry," George said, then with a smirk to his brother "Too much anyway."

"Cedric is just too good of a guy to prank."

"Besides we learned a long time ago, don't mess with the 'Puffs."

"Yeah that loyalty thing, uh..well just take our advice and don't mess with them."

"That left only the Beauxbaton's Champion and Krum."

"Madam Maxine scares us. She's bigger than Hagrid. And we can't get near Krum with all the girls following him around everywhere."

"But now Harry, you have given us Ron."

"Our own brother as Champion. Now our outlook on the year looks much brighter."

"So you see Harry, you have given us a gift beyond measure."

"Glad I could uh...help." Harry said hesitantly, "Just don't go overboard on him ok?"

Fred grinned at George and they both asked innocently "Would we do that Harry?"

Harry felt a sudden dread for what the twins might do to his friend.

Nobody noticed the beetle with strange markings around its eyes setting on the back of Colin Creevey. This particular beetle had been flying around Hogwarts ever since the Tri-Wizard tournament Champions had been announced. This particular beetle wanted one of the photos the young man had just taken and wanted it badly. The beetle followed Colin around until he developed his pictures. When he left his magical darkroom, the beetle transformed into a woman

took one of the photos and after turning back into a beetle she left Hogwarts knowing she had her next great story.

After dinner, Harry and Hermione made their way back up to the Gryffindor Common room. When they entered the Portrait hole it became immediately apparent that Ron had still been suffering some lingering jealousy once he had came up earlier. At least the smell permeating the room indicated that.

"Oh Merlin." Harry said, tears coming to his eyes. "I think I'm going to sleep in the Forbidden Forest. Between being eaten by an acromantula and sleeping in this smell, I'll take being eaten."

"Oh don't be silly." Hermione said. "Let me show you the charm to put around your bed that will block smells from disturbing you." Out of pure necessity it only took Harry ten minutes to perfect not only that spell but an advanced air freshening spell as well as they cleared up the common room as well.

"At least you won't have to sleep with this in your dorm." Harry said.

"No but I'm going to have to sleep with protective wards I think." Hermione replied.

"Why?"

"Ginny. She isn't very happy with me."

"Why?" Harry asked confused.

"You do realize that she's had a crush on you forever?" Hermione asked. "And she when she saw us earlier, she looked like she was ready to kill me."

"I thought she was over all that."

"Not likely." Hermione said. "I've even seen her writing Ginevra Molly Potter on scraps of parchment like she is practicing for the future. One day I walked in on her and I could swear she was practicing her wedding vows to you."

"But....but she's like my sister." Harry sputtered. "What can I do?"

"I'll deal with her Harry." Hermione said. "Like I said, you're mine now Mr. Potter and I'm not letting you go. Now kiss me, then grab your books, we have homework to do." As any good boyfriend should do, he did exactly what his girlfriend told him to do. Fortunately Ron wasn't in the dorm though from a few sounds Harry heard, he probably was in the bathroom.

As they were finishing up the last of their essays, Ron came down the steps. Seeing them in the common room he turned and stormed back up the steps with a minor "pbrrrrrp" trailing him, leaving an odorous barrier at the entry to the staircase.

Harry turned around in time to see Ron disappearing up the steps. "I really need to go talk to him." He said then holding his breath he sprinted up the steps. Harry found Ron either hadn't continued his gaseous purgements or the smell had had time to dissipate from their room as the air was breathable.

"Hey Ron." Harry said seeing his best friend lying on his bed. "You ok?"

"You just had to do it, Didn't you Harry?" Ron exclaimed. "Couldn't stand for me to get a little recognition, a little fame. No, not Harry Potter. You had to go and steal my spotlight. Had to kiss Hermione right at my moment to shine."

'Pbrrrrrp'

"That's not what I was doing." Harry replied. "I had just promised to kiss Hermione in the Great Hall. I figured everyone would be looking at you and she would be less embarrassed then."

"Yeah right." Ron snorted. "Look Harry, just leave me alone. Go back to your girlfriend."

"pbrrrrrpbrrrrp'

"Fine, Ron." Harry replied tears coming to his eyes as the smell encroached in his airspace. "I just wanted to make sure you were ok."

"What are you crying now." Ron asked. "Can't stand someone to have a little fame?"

"I gave it to you Ron." Harry said with his voice rising as he fault down his gag reflex. "I wanted you to have your chance."

"Fine." Ron replied. "So go and leave me alone."

"Look mate, we just want to let you know we're there for you." Harry started again. "If you need help with anything, just ask. Hermione and I would be glad to help."

'Pbrrrrrpbrrrrrpbrrrrrp'

"Oh Merlin, I can't take this anymore." And Harry dashed back down the steps.

When he got back down to the common room Hermione asked. "How did it go?"

"Not so well." Harry replied. "He thinks I kissed you to steal his moment this evening."

"But.." Hermione started.

"I tried to explain, but from his point of view, he might have a valid point." Harry said.

"Anything we can do?"

"Not right now. He is still jealous." Harry said.

Hermione sniffed at Harry's clothes. "Yeah I can tell."

At that moment Neville, Dean and Seamus came into the common room. Harry thought of the Dorm, and yelled out. "Hey guys, Uh, I was just upstairs and Ron is still suffering from his condition he had earlier." Seeing the look of panic on the other three dorm mates, he explained the barrier and air cleaning spells Hermione had shown him Hermione spent the next forty minutes showing them how they were done as well.

By the time Harry had said goodnight to his lovely girlfriend including a good night kiss that came close to the kiss shared in the Great Hall, Neville, Seamus and Dean had done a pretty good job of

clearing the smell in the Dorm. Harry cast the odor blocking spell around his bed and fell into a deep slumber where he dreamed of a beautiful bushy hair girl.

The next week disappeared rapidly. Every time Hermione suggested that Ron join Harry and her in doing their homework, Ron just reminder her that unlike them, as a Champion he didn't not have to take end of year exams.

"But Ron," Hermione would point out "You still need to learn the subject. You still have to take OWLs next year. And you're going to get points taken off if you don't turn in your homework." To this Ron would just wave his hand in contempt and go back to either reading his quidditch books or playing chess against himself.

Harry would on occasion ask Ron what he was doing to prepare for the tournament and Ron's usual reply was to point to the chessboard, "Working on strategy."

It did seem that Ron was getting over his jealousy. Or at least by somewhat ignoring Harry and Hermione he wasn't thinking about it. They had started avoiding kissing in front of him to help the situation along. That all changed the next thursday morning when Owl Post started dropping mail and newspapers throughout the Great Hall. Hermione unfurled her copy of the Daily Prophet only to see the entire front cover with a picture of Harry and herself kissing in the Great Hall. The headline read "Boy-who-lived, is now Boy-who-loves." The pumpkin juice she was about to drink was scattered all over the table.

Harry looked over at her and seeing the picture immediately grabbed Hermione's hand and started for the door to the Great Hall with most of the eyes following them. About that time, Ron had finished filling his plate with food and glanced over at Neville's copy of the paper.

"PPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTTTPPWW" once again echoed throughout the Hall as all eyes were once again focused on Ron Weasley, Tri-Wizard Champion.

When Professor McGonagall made it to the Gryffindor table, she found Neville, Dean and Seamus had done a pretty good job of

eliminating the smell. When she gave them a inquisitive look they just said "Practice."

"Mr. Weasley, may I suggest a trip to Madam Pomfrey?" Professor McGonagall said the to the red haired, red faced Tri-Wizard Champion.

"Yes ma'am." He replied and went back to eating. No less than four times was the noise repeated each corresponding to Neville turning the page of newspaper allowing the image of Harry and Hermione to reappear. After finishing his breakfast, Ron went to the hospital wing where Madam Pomfrey couldn't find anything wrong with him. She gave him several potions that she said should alleviate his condition.

As the Gryffindors and Slytherin forth years arrived for Double Potions that afternoon in the dungeons a nasty drawl came from behind Harry. "So Potter, is the bucktoothed mudblood the best you could do?"

Harry's hand wrap around his wand as he turned, "Shut up Malfoy. Just because the best you can do is Pansy doesn't mean you have to insult Hermione. Especially since she kicks your butt in every class."

"Harry, just ignore him." Hermione pleaded.

"Listen to your mudblood pet Potter." Draco said grinning at his own fabulous wit while looking at his over sized bodyguards Crabbe and Goyle.

Harry's wand was in his hand immediately, "I said shut up Ferret Face."

Draco eyes flashed as he pulled out his own wand, "Go ahead Potter. You don't have Moody protecting you this time. Do you have the guts?"

"Funnunculus!" Harry yelled

"Densaugeo!" screamed Malfoy.

Jets of light shot from both wands, hit each other in midair, and ricocheted off at angles - Harry's hit Goyle in the face, and Malfoy's

hit Hermione. Goyle bellowed and put his hands to his nose, where great ugly boils were springing up. Hermione, whimpering in panic, was clutching her mouth.

"Hermione!" Harry yelled turning to his her. She had tears in her eyes. "What happened?" he asked. But he could already see her teeth growing below her hand, as she felt them she let out a terrified cry.

"And what is all this noise about?" said a soft, deadly voice. Snape had arrived. The Slytherins clamored to give their explanations; Snape pointed a long yellow finger at Malfoy and said, "Explain."

"Potter attacked me, sir -"

"We attacked each other at the same time!" Harry shouted.

"- and he hit Goyle - look -"

Snape examined Goyle, whose face now resembled something that would have been at home in a book on poisonous fungi.

"Hospital wing, Goyle," Snape said calmly.

"Malfoy got Hermione!" Harry said. "Look!"

Hermione was doing her best to hide them with her hands, though this was difficult as they had now grown down past her collar. Pansy Parkinson and the other Slytherin girls were doubled up with silent giggles, pointing at Hermione from behind Snape's back.

Snape looked coldly at Hermione, then said, "I see no difference."

Hermione let out a last whimper and took off clutching her mouth. Harry after a contemptuous glare at the greasy haired git of a professor, followed close behind her.

"Potter!" Snape yelled. "I didn't say you can leave."

Harry chose to ignore him and continued to follow Hermione to the hospital wing.

Back in the potions classroom, Ron had sat next to Neville right in front of Malfoy's table. Snape provided them with a complex potion to start brewing. After a few minutes Malfoy said "Weasley, what do you think of Potter and the know-it-all."

'Pbrrrrrp'

"I mean he has all the fame and now he gets the girl?" Malfoy continued as he saw Ron's ears turn red.

'Pbrrrrrp'

Malfoy pulled out his copy of the Daily Prophet and leaning over his cauldron he put the picture of Harry and Hermione in front of Ron, "Doesn't that make you...." but that was as far as he got as...

"PPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTT"

"...aaaaahhhhh" Malfoy screamed as the flatulence had connected with the flames under his cauldron causing an explosion that burned off both of his eyebrows and igniting whatever gel he used in his hair. For a short time Draco Malfoy looked like a dancing human matchstick. In panic he knocked his Cauldron over and the boiling liquid poured onto Pansy Parkinson's lap who in turn jumped up accidentally kneeing Draco in the groin.

As Snape was trying to extinguish the flames from the top of Draco's head, a knock on the door and Colin Creevey came in to say that Mr. Bagman needed the Champions for photographs. Snape's glare was enough to get Ron out the door as fast as possible.

Harry was comforting Hermione in the hospital wing where Madam Pomfrey had just shrunk her teeth, when Snape came in levitating both Malfoy and Parkinson. Malfoy now looked like a burnt matchstick with the entire top of his head black and still smouldering. His legs were crossed and he was muttering incoherently, while Pansy though in obvious pain was shouting some of the most obscene words at Malfoy.

Harry and Hermione left the hospital wing in a much better mood than when they had entered, especially later when they got the complete story about what happened in the Potions class. In all the

commotion, Snape had even failed to take points from Gryffindor or put Harry in detention for not attending class.

Colin led Ron to a classroom upstairs where the rest of the Champions were gathered.

"Who wants photographs Colin?" Ron asked.

"The Daily Prophet I do believe." Colin replied.

"Excellent!" Ron exclaimed and rushed into the room.

Ludo Bagman saw Ron come in and said, "Who are you?"

"Ron, Ron Weasley. You know the fourth Champion." Ron replied.

"Oh yeah right..right" Bagman replied offhandedly. "Well we are here for the wand weighing ceremony. The rest of the judges..." his voice trailed off as Ron had turned away to face a witch dressed in Magenta Robes.

"Rita Skeeter?" Ron exclaimed. "My mom loves you. Reads everything you write. If you want I can give you an interview. Tell you everything you want to know."

"You're the Champion that replaced Harry Potter, right?" the reporter asked.

"Yeah, I taught Harry everything he knows." Ron said. "I pulled his rear out of so many spots in the last three years without me he would be dead."

"Do tell." the reporter said, and whisked Ron away into a broom closet across the hall. She reached into her purse and pulled out a roll of parchment and a acid green quill. "You don't mind if I use a Quick Quotes Quill do you?"

"Oh use whatever you want." Ron said happily. "Where shall I begin?"

"At the beginning of course." Rita said.

Twenty minutes later the door of the broom Cupboard opened and Albus Dumbledore stood there. "Ah there you are Rita, and with our forth Champion. Excellent."

"Oh thank Merlin." Rita said through half glossed over eyes. "I mean good to see you Albus. Is it time to get back to the other Champions." She didn't wait for an answer as she hurried out of the broom closet, leaving behind the parchment and a Quick Quote Quill that seemed to have been snapped itself in half.

"But we're only through my eighth birthday." Ron shouted after her.

"Come along Mr. Weasley." Professor Dumbledore said. "Time for the weighing of the wands."

When they got back into the classroom. The other champions were now sitting in chairs near the door, Ron sat down next to Cedric. He looked up at the velvet-covered table, where four of the five judges were now sitting - Professor Karkaroff, Madame Maxime, Mr. Crouch, and Ludo Bagman. Rita Skeeter settled herself down in a corner with another piece of parchment and a different Quick Quote Quill.

"May I introduce Mr. Ollivander?" said Dumbledore, taking his place at the judges' table and talking to the champions. "He will be checking your wands to ensure that they are in good condition before the tournament."

"Mademoiselle Delacour, could we have you first, please?" said Mr. Ollivander, stepping into the empty space in the middle of the room.

Fleur Delacour swept over to Mr. Ollivander and handed him her wand.

"Hmm..." he said.

He twirled the wand between his long fingers like a baton and it emitted a number of pink and gold sparks. Then he held it close to his eyes and examined it carefully.

"Yes," he said quietly, "nine and a half inches. . . inflexible.. rosewood.. . and containing. . . dear me. . ."

"An 'air from ze 'ead of a veela," said Fleur. "One of my grandmuzzer's."

"So she is Veela." Ron thought. "I'll bet now that I'm a Champion like her, she'll go out with me." and he started rubbing his hands together in anticipation.

"Yes," said Mr. Ollivander, "yes, I've never used veela hair myself, of course. I find it makes for rather temperamental wands...however, to each his own, and if this suits you.."

Mr. Ollivander ran his fingers along the wand, apparently checking for scratches or bumps; then he muttered, "Orchideous!" and a bunch of flowers burst from the wand tip.

"Very well, very well, it's in fine working order," said Mr. Ollivander, scooping up the flowers and handing them to Fleur with her wand. "Mr. Diggory, you next."

Fleur glided back to her seat, smiling at Cedric as he passed her.

"Ah, now, this is one of mine, isn't it?" said Mr. Ollivander, with much more enthusiasm, as Cedric handed over his wand. "Yes, I remember it well. Containing a single hair from the tail of a particularly fine male unicorn. . . must have been seventeen hands; nearly gored me with his horn after I plucked his tail. Twelve and a quarter inches. . . ash. . . pleasantly springy. It's in fine condition...You treat it regularly?"

"Polished it last night," said Cedric, grinning.

Ron looked down at his own wand. Fingerprints and food stains were evident all up and down it. He tried to rub some of the stains off of it and as he did gold sparks shot out then end. Fleur turned around and just snorted at him. "She's going to play hard to get huh?" Ron thought.

Mr. Ollivander sent a stream of silver smoke rings across the room from the tip of Cedric's wand, pronounced himself satisfied, and then said, "Mr. Krum, if you please."

While Viktor was shuffling up to Mr. Ollivander, Ron whispered to Cedric, "Hey Cedric, next time you're polishing your wand, can I join you? Maybe we can polish our wands together."

Fleur turned to look at Ron a giggle coming to her lips.

"She likes someone who takes care of their wand." Ron thought as he continued with Cedric, "If nothing else can I at least watch you polish yours."

Cedric just looked at Ron incredulously and scooted his chair away from Ron.

"He's just jealous that the Veela girl giggled at me." Ron thought.

Mr. Ollivander had taken Victor's wand. "Hmm, this is a Gregorovitch creation, unless I'm much mistaken? A fine wand-maker, though the styling is never quite what I... however."

He lifted the wand and examined it minutely, turning it over and over before his eyes.

"Yes... hornbeam and dragon heartstring?" he shot at Krum, who nodded. "Rather thicker than one usually sees... quite rigid... ten and a quarter inches... Avis!"

The hornbeam wand let off a blast like a gun, and a number of small, twittering birds flew out of the end and through the open window into the watery sunlight.

"Good," said Mr. Ollivander, handing Krum back his wand. "Which leaves..." Ollivander turned to Ludo who quickly said, "Mr. Weasley is our last one."

"Ah, yes. Mr. Weasley our newest Champion." Ron quickly moved up to the front and handed his wand to Ollivander, "Ah, yes another one of mine. Just last year, after your other one broke. Fourteen inches, willow, with an unicorn hair. Is this blood on your wand Mr. Weasley. Are you injured?" Then Ollivander lifted the wand to his nose. "Ah, just strawberry jam." The aged wandmaker gave the wand a quick wave and a fountain of water came pouring out. He handed the wand back to Ron announcing it was in good condition.

"Thank you all," said Dumbledore, standing up at the judges' table. "You may go back to your lessons now - or perhaps it would be quicker just to go down to dinner, as they are about to end -"

"What about the photos" Ron asked. "For the Daily Prophet."

"Yes we must have photos" Bagman said.

They spent the next hour taking the photos. Ron kept trying to get in front why the photographer kept shoving him to the side and had Krum and Fleur in the front. The photographer had made several dozen photos of Fleur, several of Krum, a couple of Cedric and only one of Ron. "I must be so photogenic, they know they only need one of me." Ron thought.

After the ceremony, Ron was on top of the world. The Veela girl had giggled at him, Cedric was going to help him polish his wand, and his picture was going to be in the Daily Prophet beside Victor Krum, how could life be any better. He quickly dashed off a note to his mother to pay particular attention to the Daily Prophet tomorrow.

The next morning Ron was waiting impatiently for the Daily Prophet to arrive. He had already shoveled down three plateful of eggs and bacon so the newspaper could have his undivided attention. When it did show up, he unfurled it quickly and there they were. The four Champions, individual pictures were taking up the top half of the page. There was Fleur, Cedric, Krum and HARRY POTTER? Ron scanned the story, as it went into detail about each of the four champions and at the very last line of the story was "Unfortunately Harry Potter, the-boy-who-lived was injured trying to perform an overly complicated spell for his age and will be unable to compete. Per the rules of the Tri-Wizard Tournament, he named Tom Weasley, son of Arthur and Molly Weasley as his replacement.

"Tom Weasley?"

Ron looked over at Harry who at that moment was staring into the eyes of his girlfriend lost to the world.

"PPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTTTPPWW"

Next Chapter, Ron V the First task.

Ginny Weasley was having a bad morning, a very bad morning. Her life had turned upside down several days earlier when HER Harry Potter kissed Hermione in front of the Great Hall. How could Hermione do that to her? She was her friend. Hermione knew that Harry belong to Ginny, it was only a matter of time before he realized it. Eventually Ginny had calmed down realizing her Harry would see that he could do much better than the Bookworm know it all with her overly large front teeth. Then last night Hermione shows up with PERFECT Teeth with some lame excuse about Malfoy hexing her. Ginny knew of course that Hermione was just going all out to keep HER Harry away from her. After seething all night, Ginny had confronted Hermione this morning. Ginny had made the mistake of pulling out her wand to cast her ever famous bat bogey hex. She hadn't counted on Hermione being faster and a lot smarter. Ginny had ended up with a stinging hex on her wand hand, and a giant pimple right between her eyes. Then on top of all that she had to listen to her bloody brother whine about the Newspaper article that morning. "Tonight", she thought, Tonight, I'll show that know it all who Harry Bloody Potter belongs too."

%%%%%%%%%

Lord Voldemort was having a bad morning, a very bad morning. It had started out very well, except the having to drink snake venom potion. While Peter Pettigrew read the newspaper article about the Tri-Wizard Tournament to him, he could already envision himself with his new body using the blood of Harry Potter and then torturing and killing the idiot boy for the pain and suffering he caused so many years ago. He had almost missed the last lines of the article as he was lost in his favorite daydream of seeing the Boy-Who-Lived DIE. But the words did enter his subconscious and slowly worked its way into his conscious mind. "TOM WEASLEY?" He screamed in his high babyish voice, "Wormtail, who is this Tom Weasley?" He asked the rat faced Pettigrew.

"I know not my Lord." Peter replied. "I spend years with the family of Arthur Weasley and I do not recognize the name."

"CRUCIO!"

After a minute of enjoying Wormtail scream in agony while convulsing around on the floor he released the curse then said to his servant. "Send a message to Crouch. I expect Harry Potter in my

graveyard as planned. No excuses will be tolerated. And tell him to find out everything he can about this Tom Weasley."

"Yes Master." Said the quivering voice of Wormtail who scampered out of the room.

%%%%%%%%%

Errol, the Weasley's owl was having a bad morning, a very bad morning. He knew it was going to be a long day when he heard Molly Weasley screaming about her youngest son after reading the morning paper. Errol knew what was in store, another long flight to Scotland. "Didn't they realize just how far away the bloody school was?" He asked himself. It's at the other end of the bloody island*. They might be able to just pop over there in an instant, but I have to fly the whole bloody way. Then they complain when I get there a little late. Haven't they ever heard of head winds? This use to be a nice place, just an occasional trip to the school to say high to the children but ever since those bloody twins and the youngest son got there, I've been up and down the country every bloody week. Summers use to be nice, but then that bloody pigwidgeon turns up. I get tired just watching that feathered puff ball." Errol heard the familiar voice of Molly Weasley screeching at a red parchment, then getting it tied to his leg and sent off with instructions to deliver it to Ron Weasley.

Errol was three hours into his flight when the string holding the Howler started slipping from his leg. Normally the faithful owl would have grabbed the string in his beak and flown the rest of the way holding it tightly, but Errol was tired and had had enough. The knot loosened further and the red envelope fell to the ground in the middle of a forest near a camping ground. The envelope sensing it had been released waited the required time to be opened and then burst out screaming in Molly Weasley's voice and finally exploding into a million pieces. The result of the explosion ignited a small forest fire that was shortly contained. Witnesses could only say that some middle aged woman was screaming about a tournament and weasels in the general area where the fire started. The Arson investigation would go unsolved.

Errol settled down in the forest a short distance away, deciding it was time for him to retire. After catching a plump rodent he drifted

off to sleep with wonderful thoughts of days without having to fly across the bloody country.

%%%%%%%%%

Ron was having a bad morning, a very bad morning. On the day that was supposed to be the best day of his life, when his picture would be on the front page of the Daily Prophet for the entire country to see everything had gone wrong. Not only was his picture not in paper, but Harry bloody Potter's was in the spot that was supposed to be his. Then the bloody paper even got his name wrong. "I should write and complain about it." Ron thought. "But that requires actually writing. I know, I'll get Hermione to do it for me." Then with a smile for the brilliant thought he looked at the spot his friends had been sitting shortly before. He noticed a bunch of letters that had been delivered to Hermione that lay there untouched.

"I'm sure they are for me," Ron thought. "They probably knew she was a close friend and wanted to make sure the letters got to me." Ron grabbed the letters and started opening them.

Miss Granger,

I am so happy you and Harry are together. The picture in the Daily Prophet was breath taking. Harry deserves all the happiness you can give him.

Emily Stonesh

'Pbrrrrrp'

Hermione Granger,

Let me take the time to congratulate you on your relationship with Harry Potter. Take care of our Hero.

Jane Woodhead

'Pbrrrrrp'

Harry and Hermione,

Wishing you all the best in your life. The picture of you two in the Daily Prophet brought tears to my eyes. It reminded me of the day my Clarence kissed me for the first time.

Alice Fox

'Pbrrrrrp'

Ron didn't hear the twins coming up behind him while he was reading the third letter. They got his attention when Fred slapped on his back and George ruffled his hair.

"What are you doing Ronnikins?" George asked.

"Reading my Fan mail." Ron replied.

Fred picked up a letter, "Fan mail? for you? Hey wait these are Hermione's letters."

"I'm sure most of these are for me, they just know she is a friend and will give them to me." Ron replied reaching for another letter.

Fred and George started grabbing the letters to give to Hermione but Ron wouldn't let go of the one he had in his hand. George and Ron each were tugging on the envelope when it ripped down the middle and a petrol smelling yellowish green liquid poured out down Ron's arm. Yellow boils erupted wherever the liquid touched.

George released his half of the envelope and tossed it at Ron. "Yep that one was definitely for you."

Ron jumped out of his seat and scampered off toward the Hospital wing, not noticing the grin the two twins shared with each other or the fact that his robes were slowly turning pink and his hair was turning green.

%%%%%%%%%

Harry and Hermione were having a great morning, but then again any amount of time they spent together they considered to be great. The two of them were walking down a corridor headed for transfiguration after escaping from another of Ron's olfactory

assaults on the Great Hall. Currently they weren't discussing the Tournament or Ron, but were discussing Hermione's teeth.

"You know you didn't have to do that to your teeth, Hemione." Harry said. "I thought you were beautiful already."

Hermione smiled at Harry as small blush crept across her cheeks. "I've never liked my front teeth, and my parents wouldn't let me shrink them with magic. Since they are Dentists they wanted me to get braces. Besides you heard Malfoy yesterday, calling me bucktoothed."

"I know but that was just ferret face." Harry said. "No one listens to him."

"Some do Harry." Hermione said "besides it was something I really wanted to do anyway. Think of it this way, if you could get rid of your scar, would you?"

"You know I would." Harry replied instantly, "Ok, I see you point. Just as long as you know I love your smile no matter what. Just seeing it brightens my day."

Those words earned Harry a kiss he remembered the rest of the week. After the kiss was complete another topic came to Harry's mind.

"I think you have to cancel the jinx on Ron," Harry said. "Our dorm is becoming environmentally unsound." He had been about to mention that the house-elves were no longer cleaning the forth year dorm anymore, but remembering SPEW he decided not too.

"I..I can't." Hermione said.

"We know he's jealous of us." Harry said. "But I've gotten to the point where I don't care anymore. I can live with it as long as you can."

"No, I didn't mean I won't. I mean I can't." Hermione said. "It is a time duration jinx."

"Uh...time duration, as in it's going to last for a certain amount of time?"

"Yes." Hermione replied looking at the ground.

How long?" Harry asked not sure he wanted to know the answer.

"Til the end of the school year. Seven months." Hermione answered sheepishly.

"Oh Merlin." Harry exclaimed thinking of months and months of the current Gryffindor Tower situation. Even the fat lady was wearing a scarf over her nose now. "I wonder if the Headmaster would let me switch to Hufflepuff until next year?"

"I doubt it Harry." Hermione answered then an idea ran through her head, "Switch...switching.. of course." Exclaimed Hermione. "That's the answer."

"What answer?" Harry asked thoroughly confused.

"The problem with Ron." Hermione admonished. "Aren't you paying attention?"

"My brain doesn't move that fast Hermoine. I'm still on the Hufflepuff idea." Harry said. "Now slow down, what is the problem and answer?"

"The smell of course."Hermione said. "I can put another jinx on top of the one currently in effect that would switch the air immediately behind Ron with air in another location nearby whenever the first jinx trips."

Harry just stared at his girlfriend. "Hermione, you are the most brilliant person in the world."

"So where should we switch the air from?" Hermione asked. "Somewhere from outside of course, but not too close to the..."

"Well if it isn't Scarface and his pet Mudblood beaver." Said a familiar drawl of a voice.

Harry gripped his wand and turned to face his nemesis, but the site of seeing Draco with bandages totally covering the top of his head and no eyelashes startled him. "I thought Ferrets had hair." Harry

said without thinking, and then continued "You must be the Ferret mummy."

"Shut up Potter." Draco snarled and went to draw his wand.

Hermione glanced up and behind Draco, "Hello Professor Moody!" She said loudly.

Draco's head spun around quickly with a pure look of panic upon his face only to discover no one was there.

"Twitchy little ferret mummy aren't you?" Hermione asked with a smile.

Draco pulled out his wand and tried to turn back to face the two of them, but he had twisted his neck so fast his it had locked into a sideways position. Harry just grabbed the wand quickly from Draco's hand and tossed it down the hallway.

"Does the poor Ferret mummy have a problem with its neck?" Harry asked Malfoy then walking over to the bandaged Slytherin he said in a soft dangerous voice. "If you ever insult Hermione again you'll find yourself lost in the forbidden forest very close to the Acromantula colony. I understand they love the taste of ferrets." Harry looked down at the floor, "Ah, the ferret mummy has a neck and a bladder control problem." Harry turned and taking Hermione by the arm they walked away leaving the Slytherin trying to work his way back down the hall toward his wand.

"Well I know where I am going to switch the air from now." Hermione said.

"Where?" Harry asked.

"Ferret country, I mean the Slytherin Common room." Hermione replied with a chuckle.

"Oh Merlin." Harry said. "Can you actually do that?"

"Of course I can." Hermione replied looking annoyed. "It's a simple switching spell between a known position of the other jinx's location and the fixed position of the Slytherin common room."

"Simple for you maybe." Harry said in awe of his girlfriend. He proceeded to pull her into a broom closet where the snogging made them several minutes late for Transfiguration. McGonagall took one look at their disheveled appearance when they entered the classroom and muttered to herself, "At least I won the pool." Then to the two late students. "Mr. Potter, Miss Granger, is there a reason for your tardiness?"

"Yes ma'am." Hermione said. "We were reviewing switching spells and lost track of time."

"Very well." Professor McGonagall said. "Make sure you're not late again or it will be detention." Then to herself, "Switching spells..hmp..looks more like they were trying to switch each other's clothes."

When class was over, Hermione went to her dorm and grabbed the jinxed contract then Harry showed her exactly where the entry to the Slytherin common room was. After that she casts the overlaying spell on the contract. "That should do it." She said. "As long as Ron's in the castle, the spell will work."

That evening Harry was sitting in an armchair in the Gryffindor Common room with Hermione sitting on his lap with her legs over the arm of the chair reading a book when Ron entered through the portrait hole. Ron's arm was bandaged up to his elbow. At the site of his two friends in such a cozy position he stomped off toward the steps as a ""PPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTT" erupted. Everyone in the common room immediately had their wands out ready to cast the air cleaning spells, but no smell came. Everyone looked around in surprise and put their wands away with a collective sigh of relief.

"You are wonderfully brilliant and I'm glad you're mine." Harry whispered to Hermione, who blushed and after a quick kiss to her boyfriend went back to reading her book.

At that very moment far below, Draco Malfoy was just getting back to his common room after spending the day in the hospital wing getting his neck straightened out. He was cursing the name of Potter and Granger so loudly he didn't hear the commotion coming from the common room. As he paused at the bare stone wall that was the entry, ready to give the password the door suddenly opened and

several Slytherins came running out trampling Draco in their path. While he lay there with a broken arm and leg unable to move, the smell that had sent the others running came drifting out of the open door. Professor Snape found him trying to crawl away several minutes later when he came to see what the problem was. With a sigh and a wave of his wand he levitated the bandaged slytherin back to the hospital wing.

The next morning, Harry was up early sitting in the common room waiting for Hermione to join him. He suddenly heard, THUMP, THUMP then a pause and then another THUMP. He heard Hermione's voice. "There's an easier way. Harry are you down there?"

"Yes, waiting for you." Harry replied.

"Excellent." Hermione said, and a couple of seconds later she had ran down the steps and gave him a hug and a kiss. "Could you help me please?" She asked him. "I need you to walk up a couple of steps to the girl's dorm."

"But it will set off the wards won't it?" Harry asked looking wearily at his girlfriend.

"Yes, and that is exactly what I want right now." Hermione replied.

"Uh...Ok." Harry replied wondering if Hermione was in leagues with the Twins on a joke at his expense. But trusting his girlfriend he took two steps up the spiral staircase. Immediately the steps flattened out causing Harry to jump back to the floor in the common room. There was a scraping sound coming from above, and a couple of seconds later a body came sliding down the ramp. It was Ginny Weasley and she was in a full body bind.

"Thanks Harry." Hermione said giving him a kiss. "I was trying to drag her down but she kept getting caught on the steps." She turned to the portrait hole where Professor McGonagall was entering looking a bit winded.

"What's going on?" The aged professor asked, then seeing Ginny, "Who was trying to get up the steps and why is Miss Weasley like that?"

"I'm sorry Professor." Hermione started. "I had Harry set off the ward to get you here quickly and help me get Ginny down here."

"But why is she like that?" Professor McGonagall asked again.

"My protective wards around my bed woke me up and I found Ginny beside my bed pointing her wand at me." Hermione explained. "Fortunately, I had been expecting something like this so I sleep with my wand under my pillow. Before she could hex me, I put a full body bind on her."

"You say you were expecting it?" Professor McGonagall asked. "Why? I thought you two were friends."

"We are, at least we were. But she's had a crush on Harry and she's a bit jealous. She tried to attack me yesterday morning as well." Hermione explained.

"So this morning she was over your bed with her wand?" The head of Gryffindor asked to clarify the situation.

"No, it was about eleven last night." Hermione explained.

"Last night? And she's been body bound all night?" Professor McGonagall asked.

"I'm sorry professor but I didn't want to disturb you that late." Hermione explained.

"Yes, well...I think you can release her now."

Hermione did the counter spell to unbind Ginny.

Over the course of the previous night, Ginny Weasley discovered one critical detail about being in a body bind. While the body is unable to use the bathroom, the effects of having a full bladder were felt during the experience. Since it was during a trip to the bathroom last evening when she had decided that was the moment to show the know it all who Harry Potter belong too, she spent the entire night with her bladder continuing to fill and overflow. When the bind was released, Ginny had one and only one thought and that was how desperately she needed a bathroom. She picked herself off the floor and dashed up the steps to the Girl's bathroom. She was about

four feet up when she realized the steps were not there and it was still in ramp configuration. Her feet slipped causing her head to impact with the ramp. That impact temporarily stunned her and she slid back down to the common room floor. As she laid there, her bladder finally decided to empty itself.

When Ginny finally got to her feet dripping on the carpeted floor, she was glaring at Hermione. Hermione on the other hand had put her arm around Harry and was smiling.

"Miss Weasley, what do you have to say for yourself." Professor McGonagall asked.

"Uh..I..Uh" Ginny stammered, for it is extremely difficult to make up a lie when you are seething in anger and standing in your own urine. Besides she really had no good reason to have been in Hermione's dorm at all much less with a wand pointed at her friend.

"I see." McGonagall said. "In that case, thirty points from Gryffindor and one week of detention and loss of your Hogsmeade visit next weekend. Miss Granger, next time please wake me if such a thing happens again."

"Yes ma'am." Hermione replied.

McGonagall waved her wand and the ramp turned back into steps and she waited until Ginny had stomped up the steps to clean herself up before turning and heading out of the portrait hole.

Harry turned to look at his girlfriend. "You left her beside your bed all night?"

"Of course not Harry," Hermione replied. "Someone might have tripped over her there. I pushed her under my bed."

"Then you dragged her down the steps?" Harry asked. "You could have levitated her, or unbound her and let her walk."

"Yes, I could have." Hermione replied then smiling at her boyfriend. "But I didn't. After all it was the second time in a day that she threatened me. I wanted to make a point this time."

"You really are scary sometimes Hermione." Harry said as his brilliant green eyes danced upon his girlfriend.

"Just making sure she got the message that you're mine Harry." Hermione said. "Now shall we go to breakfast?"

Over the course of the next week, Gryffindor tower was finally returning to some semblance of normalcy. Though there was still a cacophony of 'Pbrrrrrp' sounds heard, but the accompanying smell no longer appeared. Each resident of the tower was secretly thanking Madam Pomfrey for whatever cure she had concocted for Ron. On the other hand the dungeons of Slytherin were almost unlivable. Professor Snape and Dumbledore spent two whole days trying to track down the smell with no success. The air purification spells the Headmaster used helped for a while but the smell returned eventually. Unfortunately Snape had never learned any cleaning spells so was useless in continuing this endeavor.

When it came to living quarters there was a primary difference between Gryffindor Tower and the Slytherin Dungeons. The tower had windows, while the dungeons do not. This difference became more apparent when a couple of days later Draco Malfoy stormed into the dungeon common room. He had just come from breakfast in the Great Hall, where Potter and Granger had been revoltingly showing way to much affection for each other while his girlfriend Pansy still wasn't speaking to him. Weasley the red-headed Chumpion had continued to be a one-man exhaust system while the whole school had laughed at his "Cedric the Hogwart's real Champion/Weasley stinks" Badges since the whole school pointed out it was the Slytherins who currently stunk the most.

The mixture of methane, hydrogen and oxygen hit a critical level in the Slytherin Common room exactly at the moment Draco was walking in front of the common room fireplace. The resulting flash flame ignited the bandages on his head and seared of the minute traces of hair that had started to appear for his eyebrows. Professor Snape found his prized student whimpering on the floor of the Slytherin common room shortly afterwards and once again Draco Malfoy was levitated to the Hospital Wing, where Madam Pomfrey just shook her head and wondered if the boy's hair would ever grow back.

The week prior to the first task had not gone very well for the final Champion. He had talked Colin and Dennis Creevey into starting a fan club for him. He dug out his only galleon to pay for the start up costs for it. The Creevey brothers put a lot of effort into the process even posting flyers throughout the castle. Ron had guaranteed that whoever signed up for the club would get a free autographed picture hand delivered by the Champion himself. Toward the end of the week, he had Colin show him all the people who had signed up. He got very excited when Colin pulled out a book an inch thick. Colin turned to the last page where it was titled.

Ronald Weasley –Champion Fan Club

Members

Colin Creevey

Dennis Creevey

Harry Potter

Hermione Granger

"Is that all?" Ron exclaimed.

"Uh yeah but maybe it will improve after the first task." Colin said. He really didn't want to mention that Harry and Hermione didn't actually join the fan club. Colin had just presumed they would want to be since they were good friends.

"But what about the rest of the book?" Ron asked.

"It's nothing." Colin said "Something we started a couple of years ago." And he started to take the book away.

Ron snatched the book back, turning to the front page he read.

Harry Potter Fan Club

Current Member Total - 1439

And the rest of the book was a list of the names and comments from the various members.

"Ron, don't tell Harry. He doesn't know about this." Colin pleaded.

"PPPPWWWWWPPPPPRRRRRPPPPP"

*Ottery St. Catchpole is supposedly near Exeter which is in the most southern part of England.

Thought I was going to get the first task in this chapter. Looks like it is the next one.

Yes, Hermione might be a little out of character, maybe.

After the first task is going to be the Yule Ball. I had originally requested people to give my suggestions on who Ron should take to the Yule Ball. I have come to a conclusion when I saw one of the recommendations and the ENTIRE plot of how it happens popped into my head. In other words my muse liked it.

Bartemius Crouch Jr. sat in his office contemplating the latest orders from his Master. With a heavy sigh he thought how his Master's carefully laid plans had been completely destroyed by a careless spell used by the young Potter, even that hadn't been that bad but then the idiot had ended up breaking his arm on top of that. He gave another heavy sigh. He heard his watch give a chime, and he pulled out his hip flask and downed his latest dose of Polyjuice Potion. Then he reached for his bottle of Fire Whiskey and poured himself a glass. He sat back and looked off into nothingness as his thoughts were jumbled into a mess of despair. How was he supposed to get Harry Potter into that graveyard when he wasn't in the tournament? He would be sitting in the stands watching the other champions including his red headed idiot of a friend..... friend. An idea started forming in the mind of bogus Defense against the Dark Arts Professor. Crouch knew Harry Potter had a serious life threatening illness called Saving People Syndrome. If he could get that carrot topped stink sap plant into the Maze and then let Harry know his friend was in danger, Mr. Potter would rush to his aid. Mix in a time delayed portkey..... yes that would work, but that means Weasley had to make it to the third task. Bartemius started to make plans.

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Daphne Greengrass had had enough. How could she be the Ice Princess of Hogwarts if her icy stare was covered over with tears from the smell that had permeated the Slytherin Common room for the last few days? Her hair was frizzled and her robes smelled like a fresh hippogriff manure pile. Though the manure pile might smell a little better. Her poor sister Astoria, who's dorm was much closer to the common room hadn't slept in two nights.

Drastic times called for drastic measures, and Daphne realized it was up to her. If Slytherin House or more importantly her hair was to survive, then sacrifices had to be made and she knew exactly who she would sacrifice. Daphne along with her close friend Tracey Davies started to make plans. They composed the document that was the cornerstone of their strategy and then spread out to talk to the rest of their house. Through cunning, persuasion and the threat of bringing open flames into the common room (the fireplace was shut down due to safety reasons) they were able to obtain the support of all the members of their house except for the one who was to be sacrificed.

%%%%%%%%%

It was Saturday morning, only four days until the first task and Ron Weasley knew he needed to do something to prepare for the tournament. Harry and Hermione had asked him to join them in Hogsmeade that day (unfortunately for the Slytherins) but he had turned them down, opting to work on improving his energy reserves by downing a fifth plate of food for breakfast and retiring back to his bed to conserve that additional energy.

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It was Saturday morning and also a Hogsmeade weekend. Harry and Hermione had hesitantly asked Ron to join them as they set off for the Magical Village. Over the cacophony of excess flatulence being released he had thankfully declined their invitation saying he needed to conserve his energies for the upcoming task. Neither Harry nor Hermione made any attempt to argue with him and they set off for a day in the Village. This was going to be Harry's first authorized visit to the village and he wanted to enjoy it to its fullest. For a late November weekend, the weather was very pleasant, just a slight chill in the air that gave the two lovebirds a reason to stay close together and to repeatedly warm each other's lips. They spent the morning going from store to store, Harry didn't care for shopping too much but loved to see Hermione's eyes light up when she saw things she liked. Hermione had insisted on Harry purchasing new clothes so he could ditch the oversized hand-me-downs that came from his cousin Dudley. There were only a couple of stores that specialized in muggle clothing in the village so that experience didn't take long though Harry did love the appreciative glances Hermione made as he tried on clothes that set off his eyes.

The two of them walked hand in hand, or arm in arm throughout the village. They wandered up to the Shrieking Shack where they remembered the frightful night of the previous year, when they had gone there and found Harry's Godfather Sirius Black. As they gazed upon the shack they started talking about the rescue and Hermione confessed how much she loved it when she was riding Buckbeak. Even though she had been terrified of the heights, being behind Harry with her arms wrapped around him had been wonderful. That turned into a blissful snog in the chilly air.

Finally they ended up at the Three Broomsticks for a late lunch with some hot chocolate to warm them up. As she stared into his emerald green eyes and he into her almond brown ones, the rest of the patrons disappeared from their world. They barely even noticed when their food was placed in front of them. Subconsciously they somehow ate their lunch, but even then they would smile as she snatched a French fry from his plate and he would retaliate by grabbing a tomato or an olive from her salad. When they both reached at the same time and their hands met, their eyes once again bore into each other's soul and the kiss that followed mesmerized the other diners nearby.

"POP"

Harry recognized the sound of a flashbulb and breaking off the kiss he turned to see Rita Skeeter with her photographer. "Mr. Potter and his young love, how very charming." She said smiling.

"Ms. Skeeter." Harry replied testily as he glared at the reporter.

"Harry, why the anger?" The Daily Prophet reporter asked. "I wrote a very nice article on you and Miss Granger. Most of our readers seem to be very happy for you."

"I would have preferred if you would have respected my privacy." Harry replied still glaring at her.

"But it wasn't private, Harry, it was in the middle of the Great Hall of Hogwarts." Rita commented "Why don't you give me an interview so people can get your true feeling about the subject."

"After the way you treated my friend Ron, I would never give you an interview." Harry spat at the reporter.

"Ron? Ron who?" Rita said in obvious confusion.

"You know the champion who took my spot." Harry replied.

"Oh sorry." Rita said, "I thought his name was Tom. Is that what's troubling you, a misspelled name?"

"It's not that Ms. Skeeter. You still put my name as the champion. The Daily Prophet even ran my picture, when you knew I wasn't competing."

"Harry, we had completed the entire article before you were injured." She replied. "Hours' worth of time went into the researching and writing that article. The editor decided to push the original story, but he did include Tom's, I mean Ron's name at the end."

"But Ron said you interview him." Harry continued, "the day of the wand weighing."

"I, uh..left my notes there." Rita said looking away.

"What about his picture?" Harry asked. "We heard you took pictures of them at the same time, why didn't you print his picture."

Rita exchanged glances with her photographer who looked down guiltily. After snapping the shots of Cedric and Victor Krum, he had used the entire rest of his film on pictures of Fleur and he didn't have any film left when he snapped the shots of Ron. "Those pictures were, uh damaged Harry. But I'll make you a deal." Rita started. "I'll make sure we get some good pictures of your friend during the first task on Tuesday and we'll put it on the front page if you promise to give me an interview."

Harry looked at Rita and then at Hermione. Hermione chewed on her bottom lip as she thought over the agreement trying to find some hidden statement in her offer. After a few seconds, she nodded at Harry. "Deal," He said. "Front page article on Ron with correct name spelling and a large picture of him for a ten minute interview."

"Excellent Harry, I shall see you sometime soon." Rita said and she and her photographer walked away.

Harry looked at Hermione, "Why do I feel like I just made a deal with the devil?"

"Because I think you just might have." Hermione replied.

"You know I should write a letter to Padfoot." Harry said. "He doesn't even know about us yet or the tournament. If he saw the Daily Prophet he might be worried about me."

"If he's reading the Daily Prophet then he already knows about us." Hermione smiled at Harry. "It was a pretty large picture they had of us on the front page. But I agree that you need to write to him. He might have ideas on who put your name in the cup to start with. That still bothers me. If someone was trying to get you killed, they might try some other way to do it."

"True." Harry replied. "I better write to him tonight. What about we head over to Honeydukes. We can pick something up for Ron."

Hermione wanted to roll her eyes, but she knew Ron was Harry's first real friend and Harry was desperately loyal to his friends. "Ok Harry."

As they were getting up to leave, they saw Hagrid come in the door with Professor Moody. As they walked toward them Harry could see Professor Moody whisper a few words to Hagrid who nodded. As Harry and Hermione drew next to them Hagrid put an enormous hand on his shoulder, then leaning down he whispered "Harry, come down to my cabin tonight at midnight and bring that cloak of yours with you."

When Harry looked up and was about to reply, Hagrid put his finger to his lips and he and Moody continued on looking for a table.

After they left the Three Broomsticks, Harry turned to Hermione, "Hagrid wants me to come down to see him tonight at midnight."

"Does he?" Hermione asked. "But Harry, that's after curfew. You'll get in trouble. Maybe you shouldn't go."

"It's Hagrid." Harry said, "You know he wouldn't do anything to hurt..." Thoughts of acromantulas, dragons, three headed dogs and blast-ended skrewts went through his mind. "uh...Hermione would you like to come with me? You know just in case."

"I'd better." Hermione replied. "Someone has to keep you out of the hospital wing. Besides a midnight stroll with my boyfriend might be a wonderful thing."

A little while later they were leaving Honeydukes with a bag full of assorted goodies. Harry put his hand in cloak pocket and found a

piece of parchment in there that had not been there earlier. He pulled it out showed it to Hermione. "Someone slipped me a note in there." Hermione's eyebrows rose and the two of them read the note together.

"Potter, Granger, we need to meet to discuss important issues. Transfiguration classroom tonight 8pm."

They looked at each other wondering what the note meant. They both looked around to see if anyone was staring at them. "What do you think?" Harry asked.

"Last names? Sounds like Malfoy." Hermione replied.

"Think it is a trap?"

"Probably. But who says it has to be a trap for us?" Hermione said with a grin.

"Got a plan?" Harry asked.

"Of course Harry. Shall we go prepare for our date? Ah, a romantic evening in the Transfiguration classroom sweeping up Malfoy."

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Daphe looked at her watch and nudged Tracey. "It's time. Remember, we have got to get the upper hand. You wait outside, and back me up if I run into a problem." Tracey nodded. She was nervous; Potter and Granger were a formidable team. Getting the upper hand on them didn't seem likely.

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It was 7:50 and Harry was sitting alone in the Transfiguration classroom with his back to the door, looking at the Marauder's map. His wand was sitting on a desk beside him. On the map he saw two figures walking down the hall toward his location. "Showtime." He thought. "Let's see if Hermione's plan works."

When Greengrass opened the door to the transfiguration classroom she saw Potter sitting with his back to the door. "It's true." She thought. "Potter is too trusting. This shouldn't be too difficult."

Harry heard the door creak open, he looked one more time at the map and saw Davies remained in the hall, while Greengrass had entered. "Hello Daphne." He said quietly without turning around. "Why don't you invite Davies in as well." The stunned silence from Greengrass was almost audible.

"How...How did you know?" Daphne stammered as Tracey came in to stand beside her. This wasn't going according to plan.

Harry turned and stared at the two girls who had their wands out. "I have my ways. Now the note said we need to discuss something?"

"Where's Granger?" Tracey asked looking around the room.

"Where else? Studying, but she'll be along soon." Harry replied evenly still eying the two young women.

"So you're alone?" Daphne said, regaining her confidence, "Without even your wand in your hand? Trusting aren't you Potter?"

"I've been told that." Harry replied. "Again what do we need to discuss?"

"It's go to stop Potter!" Daphne said.

"What's got to stop?" Harry replied.

"You know what." She snarled and raised her wand.

Harry raised an eyebrow at her "Threatening me? For something I don't have a clue about?" Harry pointed his finger at Greengrass and said loudly "Expelleramus."

Both girls were stunned when Daphne's wand flew out of her hand. Behind them under the invisibility cloak Hemione was snickering at the sight of the two girls standing there with their mouths agape. It had been her plan to put awe into Draco making it seem like Harry was very powerful. So they had arranged this. He would act like he was vulnerable, expecting Draco (or whoever came) to try to get the upper hand. Then he would act like he was casting a disarming spell with just his finger saying the spell overly loudly cover Hermione's own accio summoning charm. Hermione dropped the Accio spell

immediately after the wand left Daphne's hand, making it appear Harry's disarming spell had worked.

"You...You can do wandless Magic?" Tracey said looking scared as Harry pointed his finger at her.

"Just something I picked up." Harry replied evenly. "Now put away your wand and talk to me."

Tracey nervously did just that, as both she and Daphne looked terrified now.

Hermione snuck into the hall, removed the cloak and walked back into the classroom. "Hi Harry, did I miss anything?"

"Hermione, you know Tracey and Daphne, Dungeon snakes."

"They are the ones who sent the note?" Hermione asked acting surprised and walking around to stand beside Harry.

"Seems so, just getting around to what they wanted though." Harry said.

Daphne was looking at the ground and when she looked back up she had tears in her eyes. "We just need it to stop. We know it has to be you or the twins. You're the only ones. Even Dumbledore can't figure it out."

"Again what do you need stopped?" Harry asked

"The smell, the bloody smell in our common room." Tracey yelled.

Harry looked at Hermione, "Hermione, do you have any idea of what they are talking about?"

"I know I've heard a few people talking about it in class." Hermione said, then sniffing in the direction of the two girls. "They are a little strong."

Now the Ice Princess of Hogwarts had tears streaming down her face. "We surrender. Whether it's you or the twins, we bloody surrender. Name your terms. Want us to hang Malfoy from the astronomy tower..fine, whatever." She held out a parchment to them.

"This is signed by every member of Slytherin except for Malfoy. Even Crabbe and Goyle are on board. They all agree that if it's Malfoy you want, we'll deliver him. Just make the smell go away."

Harry smiled at Hermione, and was about to say something to Daphne when Hermione cut in "We're sorry, but we really don't know what...wait. I did hear the Twins mentioning a couple of pranks they pulled. Something about the Slytherin points hourglass. Think they might have put a jinx on it to retaliate against unfair points. I also heard them whispering something about Malfoy yesterday at breakfast. Harry, did you hear that one?"

Harry wasn't sure where Hermione was going with this, so he just shook his head.

Hermione thought for a few seconds, "Something about proximity....that's it. Anytime someone got close to Malfoy, something was going to happen. Either of those might be the problem. You know the twins they like to pull some very elaborate pranks."

"Will...will you talk to them?" Daphne pleaded, her composure completely gone. "Tell them...I mean ask them to please stop the pranks. Or tell us what they want to make them stop."

"We'll try, but they have a mind of their own as you know." Hermione said. "But if those are the jinxes they did, they are only trying to make it fair. Malfoy struts around like he owns the castle and points are given to you by Snape for breathing correctly. I think if Slytherin cleaned up their act, their common room might clean itself up as well."

Both girls looked hopeful and plans started once again formulating in their Slytherin minds. They nodded to Harry and Hermione.

"We will talk to the twins as we said." Hermione repeated. "But I am sure if they are responsible and word got back to Snape, they jinxes might never go away. Understand?" When the two Slytherins nodded, Hermione continued "Now was there anything else?"

Both of the Slytherins shook their heads and left the classroom. Once they were gone, Harry looked at Hermione and they both broke out in laughter.

"What did you just do Hermione?" Harry asked.

"I think WE just made life very interesting for Slytherins." She replied with a grin and hand in hand they headed back to Gryffindor tower.

Back in the Slytherin dorms Daphne and Tracey were once again making the rounds among their dorm mates passing on the information they obtained about the possible jinxes they had heard about, and made sure everyone understood not to tell Professor Snape. They also told everyone to be careful of Harry Potter. He knew how to do wandless magic.

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Harry and Hermione spent the time until having to depart for Hagrid's composing a letter to Sirius. Harry had meant to write back immediately telling Sirius not to come back north because of his scar hurting but all the events up to now had prevented Harry from sitting down and detailing the message. With Hermione's help he finally composed a letter he hoped would be comforting and still try to get Sirius from doing something unsafe.

Dear Sirius,

My scar hasn't hurt anymore since that night. Maybe I imagined it. There isn't anything for you to do here to help. Don't do anything that might get you caught. I'm not sure if you read the Daily Prophet, but Hermione and I are together now. Also my name was entered into a tournament here at school. Fortunately my wonderfully smart girlfriend found a way out for me, so no worries there. Just wanted to let you know I am safe and want you to be safe also.

Harry

PS Hermione sends her love.

They took it to Hedwig in the owlery and sent her off to find Sirius.

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Shortly before midnight, Harry and Hermione were walking down the path to Hagrid's cabin hidden under the invisibility cloak. "Wonder

why he wants to see us?" Harry whispered. He had his arms wrapped around Hermione's waist to keep them close together. They were getting a little large to share the cloak easily.

"Probably wants us to take one of those skrewts for a midnight stroll," Hermione replied. "Get it some fresh air." The feel of Harry's breath on her neck was sending shivers throughout her body that had nothing to do with the chill in the air. She was thinking that if they didn't get to Hagrid's cabin soon she was going to turn around and ravage the boy-who-lived. Fortunately, or unfortunately depending on how you look at it they soon arrived at the cabin.

When they knocked on his door, Hagrid opened it right away and asked "You there Harry?"

"Yeah and Hermione's with me." Harry whispered.

"Of course she is." Hagrid grinned at the spot the voice had come from. They slipped past him and into the cabin where they pulled the cloak off them.

"What's up Hagrid?" Harry asked.

"Got summat ter show yeh," said Hagrid.

There was an air of enormous excitement about Hagrid. He was wearing a flower that resembled an oversized artichoke in his buttonhole. It was obvious he had attempted to comb his hair - Harry could see the comb's broken teeth still tangled in it.

"What're you showing us?" Harry asked warily as he glanced at Hermione who had a terrified look upon her face. They started wondering if the skrewts had laid eggs, or Hagrid had managed to buy another giant three-headed dog off a stranger in a pub.

"Just come with me you two, and put the cloak back on." Hagrid said.

As they slipped back under the cloak Hagrid strolled out of the cabin and headed straight for the Beauxbaton Carriage.

"Hagrid what—" Harry started.

"Shhh!" said Hagrid as he knocked on the door to the Carriage.

Madame Maxime opened it. She was wearing a silk shawl wrapped around her massive shoulders. She smiled when she saw Hagrid.

"Ah, 'Agrid . . . it is time?"

"Bong-sewer," said Hagrid, beaming at her, and holding out a hand to help her down the golden steps. Then he led her off past her winged horses.

"Wair are you taking me 'Agrid" Madame Maxine asked.

"Yeh'll enjoy this," said Hagrid gruffly, "worth seein', trust me. On'y - don' go tellin' anyone I showed yeh, right? Yeh're not s'posed ter know."

"Of course not," said Madame Maxime, fluttering her long black eyelashes.

Harry and Hermione found it uncomfortable to stay under the cloak and maintain the speed of the two larger people. But they kept following Hagrid and Maxine all the way around the perimeter of the lakes. Further on, they started hearing men shouting, and then came a deafening roar, and as they rounded a clump of trees, their mouths dropped open.

Dragons, real fire breathing Dragons.

Hagrid walked over and started talking to a red headed man that Harry recognized immediately, it was Ron's brother Charlie Weasley.

"They're beautiful Charlie." Hagrid said emotionally.

"Yeah well, I've got all the eggs counted Hagrid, so don't get any ideas." Charlie replied.

"So four of them?" Hagrid asked.

"Yeah, one for each of the Champions." Charlie had a worried look on his face. "Mom's going to have a fit when she learns Ron has to face one of these."

"Do they gotta fight'm? Hagrid asked.

"No, I think they just have to get past them. But that's bad enough. Especially for the poor Champion who gets the Horntail over there. Nasty creature, tail is as bad as the teeth."

Harry and Hermione had seen enough, and backed out slowly. When they thought they were far enough away, they turned and started talking to each other.

"Ron's got to face a dragon? We've got to warn him." Hermione said.

"Of course we do, that's why Hagrid showed them to us." Harry said. "I'm sure by showing it to us, he can always claim he didn't tell a champion." Harry looked at Hermione. "Can you imagine going against one of those things? I am glad it's not me."

They had only gone a short distance when they heard a twig snap. They instantly went silent and looked around; Harry could make out a figure in the distant. He recognized the goatee, it was Karkaroff. They crept away slowly until again they were far enough away and then broke into a run. Back to the castle, up the stairs and finally back in the common room where they collapsed on the couch and stared at each other. They both had the same thought. "Who in the bloody hell would bring a bunch of dragons to a school filled with students?"

"Ok, tomorrow morning we'll tell him. Then see if we can help him find a way around it." Harry said. "But for now, let's go to bed." A quick goodnight kiss and they went to their dorms where they both thought about what they had seen before they drifted off to sleep only to dream about roasted weasels.

The next morning Harry and Hermione woke up early so they could catch Ron before he went to breakfast.

"Ron, we need to talk to you." Harry started.

"Yeah what to do you want Potter?" Ron said and then Hermione came and stood next to Harry.

'Pbrrrrrp'

"Look," Harry started. "Hagrid showed us what you're going to be facing on Tuesday. Its dragons Ron. They are going to have the Champions get past Dragons."

Ron looked at Harry in disbelief, then his eyes narrowed, "Yeah right, like they would have us fight Dragons. Nice try Potter. Think I would run scared and give you the spot back?"

"Ron, He's telling the truth, we saw them." Hermione pleaded.

'Pbrrrrrp'

"You too?" Ron spat. "Want your boyfriend to get all the glory? Remember the deal, this is mine."

"There are dragons Ron." Harry tried again.

"Even if there were, we've faced a basilisk, compared to that, what's dragon." Ron replied and waved his hand in dismissal.

Harry's mouth fell open and he couldn't think of anything to say to that as a single thought ran through his mind. "WE faced a Basilisk?"

"Oh Ron." Hermione said. "Use your brain..."

'Pbrrrrrp' sounded as Ron's face reddened and he turned and stormed out of the common room.

Harry turned to Hermione, "What do we do?"

"We tried Harry." She replied. "Not sure what we can do. But I'm sure Professor Dumbledore has ways to protect the Champions. He'll be alright."

"Yeah, your right." Harry agreed. "I'm just glad it's not me."

When the two of them made it down to the Great Hall they saw an amazing site. The blonde Slytherin Ferret mummy was sitting all alone. Not a single Slytherin was with 10 feet of him. As Harry and Hermione looked at the Slytherin table they noticed Tracey and Daphne were glancing at them and upon catching their eye they gave a little nod.

Harry looked at Hermione and they both grinned.

"Do you think if we told the twins about the contract they would get upset? Ron is their brother." Hermione asked Harry.

"Are you kidding?" Harry asked. "They would think it is hilarious."

"I think we need to tell them then." Hermione said. "If the Slytherins start asking about the pranks they might give it away. Besides we need to shift the switching spell if they are going to make that kind of gesture." Nodding to the Slytherin table.

"Yeah ok. After breakfast? Should we tell them about the dragons too? Maybe they can get through to Ron."

Harry and Hermione had learned to eat their meals quickly as they ignored the sounds being emitted near Ron and the death glares coming from the youngest Weasley. Breakfast was soon over for them and they went in search of the Weasley twins. They found them back in the Gryffindor common room working over a table. They turned when Harry and Hermione walked into the common room.

"Excellent. Just the people we want to see." George said. "Operation Ronald is about to begin in earnest."

"Uh, guys," Harry said. "Maybe you might want to wait until the first task is over."

"But why Harry?" Fred asked. "We want to shake his confidence now. Before the task."

"Yeah, well we found out last night that he's got to go against dragons on Tuesday." Harry said.

The twins looked at them in disbelief. "Dragons? Our little Ronnikins?"

"We tried to tell him, but he doesn't believe us." Hermione said. "He thinks Harry is making it up to get his spot back."

"We think there will be some safeguards by the teachers to prevent anyone from getting seriously hurt. I mean I'm sure with champions having died in the past they would do their best to prevent it, right?" Harry asked.

"We can only hope so." Fred agreed looking nervously at his brother.

"So hold off the prank until after he gets through this task." Harry said "We don't want to do anything that might make him do something stupid."

Hermione looked sharply at Harry as to respond to that, but then bit her lip and remained quiet. She was sure prank or no prank, if Ron Weasley was going to do something it was going to be stupid.

"Good Point Harry." Fred said. "We'll wait until he finishes it."

"Thanks guys." Harry said. "Now there is one other thing we need to tell you." And he and Hermione explained about the contract and the switching spell and about Daphne and Tracey approaching them. When they had finished Fred and George were on the floor laughing so hard tears were coming out of their eyes.

"That has been you guys all along?" Fred croaked between hard to take breaths. "We have been in Dumbledore's, McGonagall's and Snape's offices several times in the last week all presuming it was us. But they never had proof so they couldn't do anything. But we think they have Filch following us every time we leave the tower."

"Brilliant Hermione, bloody brilliant." George said, causing the bushy haired teen to blush.

"It looks like the Slytherins are taking it seriously." Harry said. "Malfoy didn't have anyone within ten feet of him at the table this morning."

Fred and George were still having trouble catching their breaths.

"One of the reasons we brought you in on this, is we want to give the Slytherins a break." Harry said. "See if you have any ideas on other possibilities for this? Or should we just vent to the outside?"

George looked at his brother then back to Hermione, "What about combining two or three switching spells each activating on a random basis, so it doesn't always go to the same place?"

Hermione lip went immediately into her mouth as she started to think, then after a few seconds, "I can make that work. But where do you recommend."

"Some outside place," George said

"To give the castle in general a break." Fred finished.

"How about Snape's office?" George asked.

"Oh and keep it going to the the Slytherin common room every once in a while."

"That way they think one of their own is still causing it to happen."

"Internal strife in the home of the snakes is always a good thing."

George turned to Fred. "You know Gred, I do believe we have set a bad example for these two."

"Bad, I thought it was good."

"Maybe you're right uglier brother."

"You're just jealous of my good looks."

Hermione and Harry walked away discussing the final plan. "Can you do it?" Harry asked.

"Of course," Hermione replied. "We'll do a fixed amount of time, but randomize the schedule of the switches. Let me think." She pulled out the parchment, and after a Finite to cancel the previous charm, she quickly cast the new charms in its place. "There, that should do it."

By the next morning the Slytherins were already looking a little happier. Malfoy still had no one within ten feet of him. Even when he got up and went to sit down next to someone, everyone in the area

jumped to their feet and either sat somewhere else, or left the Great Hall altogether. Draco knew it was time to write his father.

Lucius Malfoy was sitting at his desk contemplating his life. He looked at his left arm where the Dark Mark was getting darker every week. He knew sooner or later his old master would return. For thirteen years he had grown accustomed to being his own master, raising his son, trying to teach him the proper..... His thoughts were interrupted by an owl pecking at his window. It was his son's eagle owl. A message from Draco.

Father,

I am writing to tell you that I have been viciously attacked at school and I am sure it's Potter's and that mudblood girlfriend of his fault. Now our common room stinks and no one will sit next to me. Come fix it.

Draco.

Lucius sighed. He reached for another letter he had received the previous day from the Hogwart's Headmaster detailing the incidences his son had been involved in. Cauldron explosion, trampled outside his own common room by fellow Slytherins, and a flash flame inside the common room itself. All events investigated and all seemed to be accidents. Then he took up another missive he had received from the Parkinson's. Per request of their daughter they had rescinded the betrothal agreement between Pansy and Draco. The thousand Galleons he had sent as a bribe had been returned in full. "That is going to be a problem." Lucius thought. "I have already approached every pureblood family around to get that agreement." Then he remembered that he never approached the Bullstrodes since their daughter had broke Draco's nose several years ago. "I'll send an offer to them later in the week. The Malfoy family line must continue at all cost."

Lucius sighed again as he thought of his son. He had tried to teach Draco subtlety but Draco was as subtle as Dumbledore's robes. He tried to teach him how to manipulate from the background, but Draco kept being way to outspoken, bringing too much attention to himself. And finally he tried to teach the boy how to use tone of voice to relay a verbal opinion, but the boy constantly ran off at the mouth. A sneer and a sarcastic "muggle born" was much more

effective than calling everyone mudblood. It gave allies a way to agree without committing themselves as bigots in public. After another heavy sigh as he wondered how many Galleons the current antics of his son was going to cost him. The elder Malfoy sat the letters aside; "I'll be up there for the first task tomorrow. I'll talk to Draco then." He thought.

It was just after lunch the day before the first task, and Harry was headed for Divination. Harry really hated the class now that Ron wasn't really talking to him. Professor Trelawney was at least alternating between predicting his and Ron's violent death now. Normally that would have possibly brought the two of them back together, but Ron seemed to be basking in the attention as Lavender Brown and Pavarti Patil kept looking at Ron with sorrowful eyes. As Harry walked down the corridor he saw Cedric Diggory ahead of him. "Well if I can't help Ron, at least someone from Hogwarts will know." Harry thought. He rushed to catch up with the primary Hogwart's champion.

"Cedric, hey Cedric." He yelled, when the sixth year Champion turned and saw him, Harry continued. "Got a second."

"Sure Harry."

"Look, I found out what your first task is." He said once the two were alone. "It's dragons. You have to get by a dragon." Harry said.

"What?" Cedric asked looking at Harry sharply. "Are you sure?"

"Yeah." Harry said.

"Why are you telling me this Harry?" Cedric asked. "Why not your friend?"

"I tried to tell him Cedric." Harry explained. "But he doesn't believe me. Now I know Fleur and Victor know about them. So at least you can go out there with a fair chance."

Cedric stared at the younger man, then holding out his hand, "Thanks."

"Good Luck tomorrow Cedric." Harry said as he shook the older Hufflepuff's hand "and if you get a chance, maybe throw a hint at Ron. I'm worried about him."

Cedric nodded at Harry.

As Harry walked away back toward his divination class he heard a familiar voice.

"Potter!" Professor Moody said.

"Yes sir?" Harry asked turning around. "Did he hear me tell Cedric?" he asked himself.

"Noble thing you just did." Moody said. "Did you tell your friend as well?"

"Uh..thank you sir. Uh yes sir." Harry stammered, "But he doesn't believe me. Do you know what safeguards they have to protect the Champions sir?"

"Safeguards?" Moody asked then remembering that Ron Weasley had to make it through this event. "Uh yeah, I'm sure there will be something."

"Thank you sir. I need to get to Divination." Harry said and hurried away not feeling very reassured at all.

Professor Moody suddenly felt a very large headache come on. His Master was not going to be pleased if he couldn't get Harry Potter into that graveyard. And a red-headed idiot stood in his way. He stomped off toward his office. He needed something a lot stronger than Polyjuice Potion.

During Divination Professor Trelawney called on Harry to tell about a dream he had. Harry had one last hope to save his friend. He stood up and said loudly, "I dreamed my best friend was eaten by a Dragon." And he looked over at Ron, who just snorted. Professor Trelawney gave him full marks for the lesson and commented that Harry seemed to be showing signs of a true inner eye.

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Ron Weasley, TriWizard tournament Champion had spent the night before the first task polishing his wand. He had tried to invite Cedric and Victor to join him, but his owl Pidwexion refused to deliver the messages. "Stupid owl." He thought. "He's jealous too."

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The same night Harry was going to make one last attempt to talk to Ron, but when he got to the Dorm and saw what Ron was doing, he quickly bolted back down to the common room.

"There's no way in the world I talk to any Wizard while they are polishing their wand." He told Hermione. She was about to object, until she noticed Neville, Dean and Seamus also in the common room nodding their heads in agreement with Harry. They all waited until past midnight before re-entering the dorm to go to bed.

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Lucius Malfoy and his wife Narcissa arrived early on the day of the first task. He planned to check in with his son and validate his claim to being attacked. Since all of the incidences occurred either in the Slytherin common room or his good friend Severus Snape's classroom, he immediately sought him out. Severus verified grudgingly that neither Harry Potter nor Granger had been anywhere near any of the incidences when they occurred. After listening to his son complain nonstop for twenty minutes, Lucius rejoined Severus for a bottle of fire whiskey where they remembered the good old days of murder and mayhem before Draco Malfoy joined either of their lives. Unfortunately He did have to promise his son he would join him later to watch the first task.

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The morning of the first task Ron made it down to breakfast early. He was excited. This was his day. In six hours he would show the world he, Ronald Bilius Weasley could face down any challenge. As he shoveled mouthful of food into his mouth he set up his chess set for last minute training. A few minutes later he heard a thunderous applause. Looking up he saw Cedric Diggory walking into the Great Hall. "Crap." He thought "I got here too early. They must have been too sleepy to notice me come in." He then called out to his Co-Champion "Hey Cedric, I tried to invite you to help polish my wand

last night, but ended up having to do it myself." He pulled out his wand to show him. The females that were the Cedric Diggory Fan club came in two parts that morning. The ones that had heard what Ron had yelled, were on the floor laughing, while the other half thought Weasley was jealous and trying to attack Cedric and eight stunners hit Ron before his wand was all the way in the air. Ron slumped face first into his plate of food, where the people who came to check on him swore he was still eating while unconscious.

Professor McGonagall decided to wait until breakfast was over before bringing Ron around. When finally she did cast the re-energize spell, Ron went off to History of Magic and promptly fell back asleep where while drooling over his book, he dreamed of hoisting the Tri-Wizard Tournament Cup.

After lunch, Professor McGonagall informed Ron it was time for the Champions to go down to the grounds, Ron made a quick dash to his room to make sure he had everything he needed, Polished Wand, Check, Quidditch book just in case he got bored, check, Snack...hmm...no snack. That's right he had eaten his snack right before lunch. He searched Harry's trunk and found nothing, then Neville's, nothing, then Seamus's, nothing and finally Dean's still nothing. When he got to the common room he got lucky and found a bag of treats. "Whew" he thought and picked it up and stuffed it in his cloak.

"Time to make History" he thought and strolled out the picture hole.

I PROMISE the first task will be post by end of tomorrow. I just have so many things going on in this story the length got too long. The task has been written and now I have to rewrite it and add what happens immediately after it.

It was not only the day but the moment of the first task of the TriWizard tournament being hosted at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and students made their way to the Arena by the lake to witness it. Harry and Hermione were invited to join Fred, George and the rest of the Weasley clan in one of the Champion's box seat sections that was near the judge's box. The two of them kept glaring at the Weasley Matriarch as she tried to maneuver Ginny into sitting between them. Finally after her third attempt, Hermione, to Molly's extreme annoyance stood up and sat down in Harry's lap where Harry wrapped his arms around her. She made sure Ginny saw she had her wand in her hand just in case. When they were comfortable, they brought out the Omnioculars they had purchased at the Quidditch World Cup.

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Ron strolled confidently into the Champion's tent. As he looked around and he saw the rest of the Champions were already there. "Excellent, got to make my entrance." He thought. "Now wonder what the challenge is going to be? Maybe another giant chess set."

Professor Moody limped over to him. "Weasley, about time you showed up. I need to talk to you, follow me."

"Maybe he wants an early autograph, or to join my fan club." Ron thought. "Sure Professor."

Professor Moody led him outside. "Got your plan Weasley?"

"Plan?"

"For your Dragon?"

"That's just a rumor professor, I'm sure they wouldn't give us Dragons." Ron said confidently.

Professor Moody's hand came up to his face as his head had instantly started hurting again. "Mr. Weasley, see this eye?" and his magical eye whirled around in its socket.

"Yeah and it's creepy" Ron thought.

"I can guarantee there are Dragons Mr. Weasley." His eye spun to spot behind him "I can see them."

"Oh, well ok." Ron said.

"So got a plan?" Moody asked hopefully.

"Of course." Ron replied confidently.

"Want to share?" Moody asked gruffly.

"Simple, I'll just wait for it to happen." Ron said.

Moody thought about that answer, "Did I miss something?" He wondered, "For what to happen Weasley."

"It, you know the whatever is going to happen to happen."

Professor Moody's headache was getting increasingly worse. "Would it do any good to ask?" he pondered but he knew had too. "What the heck does that mean Weasley?" he growled.

"You know, IT!" Ron exclaimed. "Whenever Harry and I faced dangers something always happens. I just have to wait for it. Be patient." Ron replied smiling at his DADA professor. "When we faced Quirrell we were able to kill him just by touching him and when we fought the Basilisk, Fawkes brought us the sorting hat and gave us the sword. Don't worry professor, it'll happen."

Barty Crouch JR. AKA Professor Moody suddenly wondered if his Master could find him if he amputated his left arm and moved to Australia. "Maybe if I confund Cedric in the Maze I can still get Harry into it." He thought.

"Yeah, good plan Weasley. Good luck there." And Professor Moody stomped off wishing he had brought the bottle of fire whiskey with him.

"Professor, don't you want an autograph?" Ron called after the retired Auror. "He didn't hear me; I'll give him one after the task."

Ron re-entered the tent, and seeing how nervous the other champions were he smiled. "He was definitely going to win today." He thought.

Ludo Bagman entered the tent at that time and addressed the Champions.

"Well, now we're all here - time to fill you in!" said Bagman brightly. "When the audience has assembled, I'm going to be offering each of you this bag" - he held up a small sack of purple silk and shook it at them - "from which you will each select a small model of the thing you are about to face! There are different - er - varieties, you see. And I have to tell you something else too.. . ah, yes... your task is to collect the golden egg!"

Ron had been glancing at the Veela girl and missed the most of what Bagman had said. Catching on the part of "You'll select what you are going to face and get the golden egg."

Bagman pulled out a purple silk sack and opened the neck.

"Ladies first," he said, offering it to Fleur Delacour.

She put a shaking hand inside the bag and drew out a tiny, perfect model of a dragon - a Welsh Green. It had the number three around its neck. Krum was next and pulled out a scarlet Chinese Fireball. It had a number two around its neck. Cedric put his hand into the bag, and out came a blueish-gray Swedish Short-Snout, the number one tied around its neck.

Finally the bag was offered to Ron, who plunged his hand into the bag and pulled out a small little dragon with spikes on its tail. It had a number four around its neck.

Ludo whistled, "A Hungarian Horntail."

Ron looked down at the dragon in his hand, "This is the dragon? We have to get by a four inch dragon? Told them it wasn't going to be anything to worry about. And I get to go last. Excellent! I can show them what I can do." He looked at the little dragon again. The little horntail belched flames up at him, burning the tip of Ron's nose. "Ouch. You bloody little arse," he yelled at the Dragon. "Wonder if I

win if I kill it right here and now?" he asked himself. "Nah, wait and do it in the Arena."

Bagman left to do the commentating but it wasn't very long before Cedric was called out to compete. Ron thought Ludo must be exaggerating to make it sound more exciting as he heard his play by play.

"Oooh, narrow miss there, very narrow". . . "He's taking risks, this one!". . . "Clever move - pity it didn't work!"

"Maybe Cedric is hamming it up to get more points." Ron thought. "Or maybe he let it get away."

After another 15 minutes Ron heard the roar of the crowd.

Victor was called out next and it took him another fifteen minutes to get through his as well.

As Fleur neared the tent flap waiting to be called, Ron strolled over to her. "Hey Veela, what do you say you and I grab a couple of butterbeers after this and party." He then swatted her arse just to make sure she knew he was interested.

To say the part Veela was pissed would be like saying Ron liked to eat. The order of magnitude far eclipsed the actual words that can be used. Fire danced in Fleur's eyes as first her fingers elongated as they turned to talons, her skin transformed into feathers and she started sprouting wings, while a ball of flame materialized in the palm of her taloned hands. Right at that moment her name was called. She looked once at Ron with obvious desire to kill, destroy and mutilate before turning and flying off for the Arena.

"That chick is hot and she's got it bad for me. Couldn't keep herself under control." Ron thought as he watched his date fly away. "Definitely going to be a good party tonight."

Over the noise of the crowd came Ludo's commentary.

"What, oh merlin, someone protect the Dragon. Aaah. Oh that was a mess. Well Fleur Delacour was the first to her egg at....ten seconds. Everyone take a break while they clean that up."

It was another half hour before Ron heard his name called. He pulled out his newly polished wand and with his dragon in his hand; he strolled out of the tent and into the Arena. He had heard that Fleur had got her egg in ten seconds so he knew he had to be fast. So as soon as he entered the arena he threw his Dragon to the ground and stomped on it. "Dragon dealt with" He thought "Now to find the egg." He turned to face the rest of the arena, and found he didn't need to find an egg. As he looked at a fifty foot tall real HUNGARIAN HORNTAIL dragon in front of him, Ron Weasley TriWizard Tournament Champion laid his own egg. It was browner in color but he followed it shortly with a liquid yellow coating.

Ron saw a glint of yellow his subconscious presumed was the golden egg, but he was too busy looking at every single tooth that the dragon had, along with the flames coming out of its mouth, and the tail that was lined with spikes all down it for his conscious mind to really care about anything else. "Why didn't someone tell me?" He mentally cried out. "Where's the chess set? Or catching a key to get through a door? Why does Harry always get the easy ones?"

Ron did the only thing he could think of. It's what he always does when he was nervous, or terrified, or happy, or sad, or melancholy, or any other time for that matter, he reached into his robes and pulled out the bag of snacks and ate.

In the stands, Hermione had her hands over her eyes; but Fred who had borrowed her omnioculars had them trained on his brother. "George." He said to his brother. "What did you do with that bag of candy we had this morning?"

"Uh..not sure. I think I left it in the common room." George answered. "Why?"

"I think Ron's got it." Fred said handing the omnioculars to George.

After looking for a second, "You're right. That is it. Oh no..he's...he's stuffing several of them in his mouth."

"More than one?" Fred asked

"At least six." George replied.

"Uh oh."

Harry had been listening to the twins, and turning his own omnioculars to his friend he asked "What's going on guys."

"We've been working on a new prank candy called Canary Creams." George responded.

"They're really cool, they turn the subject into a Canary for a few seconds and then they molt, and turn back to normal." Fred added.

"So what's the problem?" Harry asked.

"If you eat more than one at a time you get a..uh molting problem." George answered. "And it can last for a few minutes."

Ron had just crammed several of the creams into his mouth and thought about his problem when IT happened. He noticed his skin was turning into yellow feathers, his feet were changing into bird's feet and looking down his nose he could see he had a beak. Turning to his arms, they were now wings.

Ron Weasley TriWizard Champion was a five and a half foot bright yellow Canary. He let out a scream

"TA WEET, TA WEET"

Starting immediately after this day, Dragon researchers spent years trying to figure out what exactly about a five and a half foot yellow Canary looking creature causes a Hungarian Horntail Dragon to go absolutely berserk. The only thing that could determine was there use to be some yellow creature similar in size that was the mortal enemy of the Horntail and the urge to kill it was implanted into its genetic makeup overwhelming all other instincts.

With a shrug and a deafening roar the Hungarian Horntail broke free of the massive chain that held her in place smashing all of her eggs and knocking the golden egg into the center of the Arena. The mother dragon took off in pursuit of the Yellow Canary Creature spilling fire left and right.

Molly Weasley realizing her son was in mortal danger leapt out of her seat and jumped into the Arena, running after the dragon with

her wand raised shouting "Stay away from my Ronnikins you bad dragon."

Ron Weasley was not an athletic person; in fact lazy was a far more apt term, but when a fifty foot Hungarian Horntail dragon was in pursuit of him, he found he could run. He could run extremely fast especially on those scrawny bird legs. For the next ten minutes every person in the arena watched as the Horntail chased the Yellow Canary around the arena, while the dragon itself was being chased by an irate Molly Weasley. Every spell cast in trying to subdue the crazed dragon either by dragon handlers or Molly Weasley just bounced off the dragon's hide and the weird Red Hair woman chasing dragon chasing Canary creature continued. In an unfortunate turn of events, the Canary happened to look into the seats right next to the judges stands where Hermione was sitting on Harry's lap with her head buried in his shoulder, and he was holding her closely.

"PPPPPPWWWTTTTTPPP PPPPPWWWTTTTPPPPPP"

Since he wasn't in the castle, the switching spell did not take effect, and the full Methane, Hydrogen, Oxygen, Sulfur mix came pouring out of the TriWizard Champion Canary at an explosive rate. The discharge coincided with a well aimed flame burst from the hot in pursuit Horntail Dragon. Though Newton's third law is not commonly known in the wizarding world, it was truly in effect at that moment as the Yellow Canary took flight on top of an explosive jet of flames. Most of the witnesses say it topped out at around twenty five feet at which point the Canary realized its wings were useless for that size of the bird and it plummeted back to the ground where it came to rest on top of the Golden Egg right in the middle of the Arena.

"POP" went the flashbulb.

It was at that moment the Canary Creams effects wore off and as Ron converted back into a person, the molting problem Fred and George had mentioned became apparent to Harry as well as everyone else in the stadium.

Ron Weasley, TriWizard Champion sat upon his Golden Egg totally naked.

As Dragon handlers rushed to subdue the Hungarian Horntail who was much more passive now that the five and a half foot yellow creature was gone. The stadium was silent as they took in the sight and threw that silence came "POP", "POP", "POP" as more flashbulbs exploded as cameras were recording the picture for all posterity.

Finally a huffing and a puffing Molly Weasley caught up to her son who sat upon his egg with a glazed look in his eyes as he stared at some speck of dirt in front of him but not seeing anything. Madam Pomfrey later discovered that not only had the fall from twenty five feet broken a few bones, but the flesh of Ron's buttocks had been seared so badly that they had sealed around the Golden Egg when the two had made contact after that long of a fall. This is not to mention the additional discomfort he felt when a more sensitive area just in front of the buttocks also contacted the metal egg while the body was descending from that height.

Molly Weasley in desperation to get her son to the medical tent levitated her son to an upright position and it was at that moment when he, in his naked splendor with a golden egg stuck firmly to his arse was in perfect view of every student, teacher, and honored guest at Hogwarts, that any chance of Ron Weasley ever getting a date with any witch at the school died forever.

From the Slytherins it came first, and then the Ravenclaws, and then the Hufflepuffs, and finally the Gryffindors the laughter came, and it grew and grew. Eighteen people later reported to the medical wing due to broken ribs from laughing too hard. Another twelve for broken bones suffered from falling out of the stands from the same laughter.

Harry and Hermione rushed to the medical tent to see how he was doing only to draw up short when they heard the nurse tell his mother about the injuries.

"The broken bones will be no problem but we have to let the swelling in his...uh rear go down before we can remove the egg." She was saying. "And until the egg is removed we can't treat the burns magically. The uh...shrinkage in his privates we aren't sure about and might be because of the fall."

"What do you mean" Molly asked. "I didn't see anything different about his privates."

"Oh..well in that case..." That was all Harry and Hermione wanted to hear and turned to leave and almost bumped into Professor McGonagall who from the greenish look on her face had heard the same diagnosis. They quickly apologized and dashed back to their seats to await the scoring.

They got back just in time to see Madame Maxine raise her wand and a silver ribbon shot out of it. It twisted itself into a large three.

Mr. Crouch came next. He shot a two into the air.

Dumbledore raised his wand and sent a four into the air.

Ludo Bagman – one.

Karkaroff raised his wand, paused for a moment and then the ribbon shot out of the wand too, the ribbon broke into two parts and became a negative three.

"Impressive." Said Hermione.

Harry looked at his girlfriend. "But those scores were horrible."

Hermione looked at Harry in confusion, and then realization hit her. "Oh I wasn't talking about the score; I meant it was impressive that Karkaroff knows what a negative number is."

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When Ron the Yellow Canary had been launched onto a jet of flames, Harry and therefore Hermione leaped to their feet. Now when a fourteen year old boy, or even a fifty year old man has had a beautiful young lady on his lap for a couple of hours, certain...uh....adjustments have to be made when they stand up. Harry made the adjustments with alacrity and looked on in horror at his friend's predicament, but people seeing that motion later recanted that Harry had performed wandless magic and it was that action that saved Ron Weasley's life. As the story grew over time, Harry was given credit for transforming Ron back into a person, saving everyone in his box from certain death and in a mix-up between two stories it was said he charged the rampaging dragon

with the sword of Gryffindor in his hand and single handedly slaughtered it in front of the whole school.

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Back in a curtained off section of the medical tent, Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy looked down upon their only son. Draco's head had not been re-bandaged this time as the injuries to the Weasley kid had taken priority due to the severity. Thankfully Madam Pomfrey had been able to administer a pain and sleep potion before hurrying off. As the elder Malfoys took in the sight that was their only son, they noticed the black burns that were the top of his head, how his eyebrows no longer existed and now the top of his left ear seemed to have melted. As Lucius pondered the events of the previous couple of hours that had led to this, he couldn't help wonder how much he would have to pay the Bullstrodes to get Millicent to marry his son now.

Flashback

Lucius was sitting with his son in the stands of the Dragon Arena. When they had taken their seats in an obvious Slytherin section every single Slytherin in the area had got up, no that was understatement, they had scrambled head over heels in an attempt to distance themselves from the Malfoys.

"So Draco," Lucius started to his son. He was having a hard time looking at him with all the bandages covering his head. "Why does everyone leave when you approach?"

"I don't know father." Draco whined. "But I am sure it's Potter's fault?"

"What makes you think that?"

"It's always his fault!" Draco replied.

"So," The elder Malfoy said cautiously, "You think Harry Potter is the reason for this, because he is always the reason things happen?"

"Of course." Draco spat.

"I see. Well let's enjoy the competition shall we."

"Yeah, I get to see the Blood traitor get eaten by a dragon." Draco smiled.

"Draco, remember, its families who keep 'unsatisfactory company' not blood traitors. " Lucius informed his son.

"Yeah, Yeah whatever. When are you going to buy me a firebolt? Potter has one." Draco replied.

"Yes, you've told me several times about Potter's firebolt." Mr. Malfoy said through gritted teeth.

The two of them watched as the event started, Cedric had come out and transfigured a rock into a dog, which had worked pretty well until the dragon changed its mind about and went after Cedric instead of the dog. But the young man got his egg and was applauded accordingly, except by Draco Malfoy.

"A Dog?" He sneered. "I would have transfigured the rock into an Elephant or something."

Lucius glanced at his son before nausea forced him to turn away, as remembered the letter he had got from Professor McGonagall a month ago saying his son still was having trouble turning a beetle into a button which most students mastered in the second year.

The next contestant, Victor Krum hand sent a pretty good conjunctivitis curse at his Dragon, which would have been excellent if the Dragon hadn't went into a rage and destroyed a good portion of its eggs.

"If it had been me." Draco had started again. "I'd have done a stinging hex up its nose and then blinded it after it moved away from its eggs."

Finally the Beauxbaton champion made her appearance. Lucius had known that the young woman was part Veela, but never expected her to appear in full transformation. He knew it required extreme anger for such transformations to occur, even more so for a partial blooded one. Whatever had angered her, the dragon took the brunt of it. Lucius was sure he counted eight fireballs in less than five seconds all delivered directly between the poor unsuspecting Welsh

Green Dragon's eyes. The head had exploded raining blood and gore over the dragon handlers. The Veela had then grabbed her egg and transformed back into a young attractive blond woman.

"Mixed breed just had to show off." Draco had started up again. "Pathetic, can't even do real magic."

Lucius sighed heavily. "I wonder if I should have a paternity verification test done." He thought. "There is just no way he came from my loins." Lucius wasn't a fan of mixed breeding. He truly believed Pure Blood wizards and Witches were superior in every way but he really didn't want to get on the wrong side of a Veela as evident by the bloody mess in the middle of the arena.

As his son continued to rant and rave, blaming every misfortune that had ever happened to him on that 'Damn Potter' and his 'Mudblood whore' Lucius remembered why September first had become a very happy day in the Malfoy family. He got up from his seat, telling Draco he was going to find a loo. He really just needed a break and truly desired a glass of fire whiskey. "Maybe Snape brought a bottle with him."

Fortunately Snape had remembered the bottle, and the two of them were enjoying their third glass when the final Champion had entered the Arena. Watching the Dragon chase the over sized Canary around the arena was extremely funny, especially when the two of them were too drunk to care. Neither of them noticed that one of the stunners that Mrs. Weasley had sent after the dragon had bounced off it, and hit Draco squarely in the chest, causing him to slump over the railing and onto the Dragon ground. Nor did anyone notice when the extremely angry Horntail missed a TA WEETING canary with a stream of fire that had hit a lump of white bandages laying on the ground just next to the stands. It was only after the Horntail had been subdued that one of the dragon handlers had stumbled upon the body with the smoldering head bandages and had called for medical assistance. Fortunately thought the Patriarch of the Malfoy family later, with everyone gawking at the clothless final champion with a golden egg stuck up his arse, no one noticed the heir of House Malfoy being levitated away as well.

End Flashback

Though Harry and Hermione tried later in the evening, Madam Pomfrey was not letting Ron have visitors in the Hospital Wing. She advised them that Mr. Weasley was still unconscious and would remain so at least overnight. "Or until we can remove that egg." She had thought to herself.

They had been able to visit with the Weasley Twins, who both were recovering from shattered eardrums courtesy of the Weasley Matriarch after she had learned how her youngest son had turned into a Canary and almost served as dessert to a Horntail dragon.

"Damn." Harry exploded the next morning at breakfast.

"What's wrong Harry." Hermione asked.

"I owe Rita an interview now." He replied and handed Hermione the Daily Prophet that had just been delivered. As she looked at she saw that Rita Skeeter had kept her word as the entire top half of the front page of the Daily Prophet had an enormous picture of a Yellow Canary sitting upon a golden egg, and the picture moved through the entire molting process. Underneath the picture was the caption.

RONALD BILIUS WEASLEY – TRIWIZARD CHAMPION LAYS AN EGG

(see page 3 for story)

Making up the entire bottom half of the front page of the Daily Prophet was a full moving picture depicting Harry and Hermione's kiss that was taken in the Three Broomsticks. The caption of that picture read

TRUE LOVE as the BOY-WHO-LIVED is now the BOY-WHO-LOVES

(see pages 4-5 for complete story)

(see page 6 as experts break down his kissing skills)

The story on Ron gave an accurately depicted his battle with his dragon, including the fact that his mother was chasing after the dragon calling him "Ronnikins." The stories on Harry and Hermione broke down their entire visit to Hogsmeade including what they had

purchased in every store and what that had ordered for lunch. The witches who analyzed Harry's kissing skills were impressed but also included their owl addresses in case Harry wanted further lessons in improving his skills.

Mrs. Weasley was sitting at the bedside of her youngest son reading the Daily Prophet's article on her son. When her Ronnikins began to stir, she sat the newspaper down and rushed off to find Madam Pomfrey. When Ron came to, he looked over at the chair sitting next to the bed, and saw the front page of the newspaper. He saw the picture of himself, complete with molting, then he saw the picture of Harry and Hermione kissing in the three broomsticks.

"PPPPPPWWWWTTTTTTTTPPPPP PPPPPWWWWTTTTTTTTPPPP
TTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTTTTTTPPPPPP"

As Madam Pomfrey and Molly Weasley came rushing back into the hospital wing to determine the cause of the ear shattering noise, they discovered Ronald Weasley TriWizard Champion no longer needed surgery to dislodge his golden egg. It had been forcefully removed by the expelling air and catapulted across the room only to strike the still unconscious Draco Malfoy in the head. Unfortunately for the young Weasley, all the skin that had stuck to the side of the egg left when the egg did. He passed out from the ensuing pain.

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Far below in the dungeons, Professor Snape was busy brewing the complicated Felix Felicis potion in his office. His cloak billowed as he stood perfectly still looking at the shimmering liquid that was in the Cauldron as it simmered over a small flame. He had been working on this potion for four months and it was going to be ready in just an hour's time. He just needed a little luck to catch Potter at something and get him expelled, and this was the answer. He sneered happily as his cloak billowed again. The first hint he had something was wrong was the smell, instantly his whole office smelled of dead rotten corpses smothered in pure sulfur. The next hint was when his office exploded, the flash flame that was ignited by the methane hydrogen combination set off a chain reaction of other various flammable potions around his office all igniting one by one. Responding to the noise he heard from his office high above the dungeons, Professor Dumbledore discovered his pet death eater mumbling incoherently under the rubble that was his office.

Next up the Yule Ball date...

Madam Pomfrey was tired. It had been a long week since they first task had completed and she had yet to get a good night sleep. First it was the Weasley kid and that bloody egg. She snickered at her own joke as she remembered the skin and blood that covered the egg where it came to rest. It took Molly Weasley fourteen cleaning spells to finally get it completely clean. "Merlin I must be tired, if I thought that was funny." She thought. After the egg had been dislodged she had taken her anti-nausea potion and set to work healing Mr. Weasley's buttocks. Though she had been able to repair most of the damage, it would still be a few days before he felt comfortable sitting down again.

Then there was Severus. She looked over at his bed where the blankets were billowing every time he took a breath. Fortunately the oil in his hair was too contaminated to ignite and actually had provided insulation for his hair and head. It had taken Madam Pomfrey two days to identify all forty seven potions that had ignited in the Professor's office and had come in contact with him. Her fatigue was proven when she had tried to reduce the swelling of his nose for the eighth time, until Albus finally reminded her that it always had been that large.

And the final one of the severely injured patients she had in her care was Draco Malfoy. Madam Pomfrey had had the unpleasant task of informing his parents, that at most he would re-grow only about thirty percent of his hair. There just had been too much damage over such a short period of time. She had also pointed out that he might get his left eyebrow back but the right one was gone forever. She had spent hours on his ear, and finally got it back someone in shape. It didn't quite match the other one, but it didn't look melted anymore either. While Narcissa had cried over her son's unconscious body, Lucius had strolled out of the Hospital Wing mutter something about having to talk to the Bulstrodes before this news got out.

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The Weasley twins had been busy since the first task had been complete. They had been inspired by their brother's performance and in memory of it, they had created Canary and Horntail figures similar to the ones they had seen at the Quidditch World Cup. The Dragon action figure would chase the Canary until the little Canary's tail caught on fire at which point the little bird would lay a golden egg. Their supply couldn't keep up with the demand. All of school little

Horntail dragons chased miniature canaries until the appearance of the golden egg. Fred and George also had a brisk business going on their canary creams and a new product they created call Horntail honeys which turned a person into a Horntail dragon complete with simulated fire breath. Students were constantly changing into one or another at every meal. They had also created a Blonde Veela figurine complete with flame dispensing capabilities, but they were quickly withdrawn from availability when the twins were visited by the Beauxbaton Champion. Rumor had it they had to make a visit to Madam Pomfrey to cure some burns in some sensitive areas shortly afterwards.

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The morning he was released from the hospital wing, Ron was gingerly walking back to the Gryffindor Common room proudly displaying his egg so everyone could see it. Most people he encountered remembered the last place they seen the egg and quickly dashed off to the loo to vacate the breakfast they had just consumed. Ron was overwhelmed at the support he was receiving as they celebrated his victory by turning themselves into Canaries and Horntails. The little horntail dragon figurines that kept blowing flames at him where annoying but heck it showed the students loved him.

"People are probably lining up to join my fan club now." Ron thought. "I better talk to the Creevy's soon. They might need to take more pictures. Especially one of me and my Egg."

As Ron entered the Common room he saw Lee Jordon and several older Gryffindors gathered around the table watching their action figures re-create their favorite TriWizard event. As the Canary once again had its tail feathers ignited and the golden egg fell to the ground, the crowd cheered. Ron never figured out that the cheering was for the horntail, not the Canary.

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Harry found another note in his pocket later in the week and again he and Hermione were met by Daphne and Tracey later in the evening, but this time there was a third Slytherin female joining them. The third person was large, square jawed and resembled a Hag.

"Thanks for seeing us," Daphne started trying to suppress her natural haughtiness. Ever since her eyes had stopped watering and her hair returned to its former silkiness, her Ice Princess persona had returned in full force. "Do you know Millicent Bulstrode?"

"Why is she here?" Hermione snapped. She remembered all too vividly the incident at the Dueling session in the second year.

"She's the uh reason we need to see you." Tracey murmured. "She needs to be able to be around Malfoy. So we want to know if they twins can single out her or remove the jinx from him altogether?"

"Why?" Harry asked.

"My father and Draco's father have come to terms on our Betrothal." Millicent said in her deep voice.

Harry looked at Hermione and they both mouthed "Betrothal?"

"I thought Parkinson was betrothed to Malfoy?" Harry mentioned.

"Oh no." Millicent said "She had her father cancel that after the cauldron incident." Millicent said. "Now he's all mine." She said dreamily. "I promise I'll keep him in line."

"Uh..yeah. We'll talk to the twins, but I know they wouldn't want to...uh..stand the in the way of true love." Harry said. "I'm..uh..sure they would want you to be happy."

"Thank you...thank you." Cried Millicent in her deep bass voice. Harry was very thankful she didn't want to hug him. He was sure his ribs wouldn't take the strain.

After the Slytherins had left Harry and Hermione rushed to find the twins just in case they were thanked by an appreciative Millicent.

%%%%%%%%%

When Draco Malfoy regained consciousness he noticed someone was sitting on his bed looking at him. It took a few minutes for his vision to clear. It was Millicent Bulstrode who stood five inches taller and sixty pounds heavier than Draco.

"What are you doing here, Bulstrode?" He sneered.

"Oh Draco, is that any way to talk to your future wife?" Millicent answered.

Draco missed what Millicent had said and replied "Where's Pansy? Why isn't my betrothed here?"

Millicent looked hurt. "But Draco dear, she canceled her betrothal." Then she smiled "And your father and my father reached our betrothal agreement."

Draco's sneer dropped in mid lip raising. "An....agreement? A Betrothal agreement." Draco swallowed hard.

"Of course." Millicent replied and a sense of doom fell upon Draco's chest where most people's hearts are.

"They agreed to a short Betrothal and for us to be married on Easter Break." Millicent replied smiling at her future husband.

"But...but...but." Draco sputtered then finally was able to finish the sentence. "How..how...what...what.. do you mean. I'm only fourteen, I can't get married."

"Of course you can." Millicent said, taking Draco's hand causing him to flinch. "Your father has already signed the paperwork. The headmaster is working on having our married housing ready for us when we return from our Easter honeymoon."

"But..but.." Draco could not process the information. The last thing he remembered was being betrothed to the very lovely Pansy Parkinson and watching the hilarious antics of Ron Weasley at the first task. "It has to be a dream..It's a nightmare." He thought. "Just have to pinch myself."

"OUCH!"

"have to try again.OUCH!, again,OUCH!..Uh....FATHER!" Draco screamed as he realized he wasn't dreaming.

"Oh he isn't here love." Millicent said to her betrothed. "Your mother had to take him home earlier. He had too much Fire Whiskey from celebrating our Betrothal."

"You said married housing?"

"Of course future husband of mine, we have to have married housing don't we?" Millicent said. "It isn't like we can make love in your dorm room. The betrothal contract is quite specific on producing a heir as soon as possible, many of them in fact. It seems your father is concerned about how accident prone you are."

Draco fainted.

"Oh dear," Millicent said to Madam Pomfrey as she rushed to Draco's bedside. "All the good news must have overexcited him."

%%%%%%%%%

Harry and Hermione were on their way to Care of Magical Creatures on an early December morning with trepidation in their hearts. Though they loved Hagrid they hated the Blast-Ended Skrewts. At least the things had been kind enough to kill each other off. There were only ten of them left. Unfortunately those were the ten that were the biggest and strongest having survived the battles with their brethren. As they neared the class area Rita Skeeter made an appearance.

"Harry," She said. "I think you owe me that interview now."

Harry turned to Hermione and rolled his eyes, but he realized an agreement was an agreement and nodded sullenly at the Daily Prophet reporter.

"Ms. Granger if you wish to join us you may."

Harry looked pleadingly at his girlfriend. "Ok." She said, then whispered to Harry, "Oh are you going to owe me for this one." She join Harry and the reporter as they went into Hagrid' cabin for a quieter place for the interview.

Ron Weasley was still very sore in a tender area so he was a little late for the Care of Magical Creatures class. When he got there he

noticed Harry and Hermione were not there. "Probably off snogging somewhere" he thought.

'Pbrrrrrp'

Since he wasn't in the castle, the smell lingered behind him and he soon found himself standing alone.

In the class Hagrid wanted to find out if the skrewts were going to hibernate and had provided pillow lined boxes to find out. Unfortunately the students who tried to lead the armored, stinging, and blast propelling creatures into the boxes found out the skrewts were not interested at all in sleeping for an extended period of time. In fact they distinctly did not like the idea, resulting in a smoldering wreckage of pillows and crate pieces strewn about the grounds.

Ron found himself face down in a muddy area unable to get back up due to his 'injuries'. He didn't noticed the very unhappy skrewt that was headed his way, but he did notice when the door to Hagrid's cabin opened and Harry and Hermione came out followed by his mother's favorite reporter Rita Skeeter.

"Thank you for the wonderful interview Harry." Rita was saying. "You two make a wonderful couple."

"PPPWWWTTTTTPPPPPPWWWTTTT"

Unfortunately the outburst from the red headed Champion happened at the same time the Blast Ended Skrewt had initiated the event that gave it its name. It wasn't even close. Whereas the skrewt could propel itself six to ten feet, Ron Weasley Blast-Ended Wizard traveled at least fifteen before skidding to a halt in another mud pile. Unfortunately the skrewt was caught in the backlash of blast and smell and Hagrid now only had nine left.

%%%%%%%%%

"Weasley! Will you pay attention?" Professor McGonagall's voice ranged out. Ron had his golden egg out on his desk and he kept moving it around trying to catch anyone's eye with it. Ron himself was standing beside the desk. The skrewt incident had caused so much additional damage he still found it impossible to sit down.

It was the end of the lesson; they had finished their work; the guinea fowl they had been changing into guinea pigs had been shut away in a large cage on Professor McGonagall's desk (Neville's still had feathers); they had copied down their homework from the blackboard ("Describe, with examples, the ways in which Transforming Spells must be adapted when performing Cross-Species Switches") and the bell was due to ring any moment.

"Now, that I have EVERYONE's attention." McGonagall glared at Ron. 'I have something to say to you all.'

"The Yule Ball is approaching - a traditional part of the Triwizard Tournament and an opportunity for us to socialize with our foreign guests. Now, the ball will be open only to fourth years and above - although you may invite a younger student if you wish - RONALD WEASLEY WILL YOU LEAVE THE EGG ALONE AND PAY ATTENTION." Ron sat the egg back on his desk and turned back to the aged professor.

"Dress robes will be worn," Professor McGonagall continued after getting the red head's attention, "and the ball will start at eight o'clock on Christmas Day, finishing at midnight in the Great Hall. Now then -"

Professor McGonagall stared deliberately around the class.

"The Yule Ball is of course a chance for us all to - er - let our hair down," she said, in a disapproving voice.

Lavender looked at Pavati Patil and they both giggled with their hands pressed hard against her mouth to stifle the sound. Harry could see what was funny: Professor McGonagall, with her hair in a tight bun, looked as though she had never let her hair down in any sense.

"But that does NOT mean," Professor McGonagall went on, "that we will be relaxing the standards of behavior we expect from Hogwarts students. I will be most seriously displeased if a Gryffindor student embarrasses the school in anyway." She glared at Ron intensely.

The bell rang, and there was the usual scuffle of activity as everyone packed their bags and swung them onto their shoulders.

Professor McGonagall called above the noise, "Weasley - a word, if you please."

Several of students were still packing up their bags as they heard the exchange between McGonagall and Ron.

"Ron, the Champions and their partners -"

"What partners?" asked Ron suspiciously.

"Your partners for the Yule Ball, Weasley," McGonagall said coldly. "Your dance partners of course. Now the Champions and their partners will be opening the ball, so make sure you have a partner and don't embarrass this school."

"Of course I'll have a partner." Ron said "I'm a Champion, who wouldn't want to date me."

McGonagall stared at the Ginger topped Gryffindor as she pondered whether overeating can cause brain damage. "Very well. You may go." Once he left the classroom, the deputy headmistress uttered several Scottish curses and headed for the staff room where she knew Flitwick kept a bottle of fire whiskey hidden just for such emergencies.

Lavender Brown and Pavati Patil were two of the students who overheard the exchange and they stared at each other in horror. They rushed from the room and word went out. They told their fellow Gryffindor's women, and the word continued to pass. First to Ravenclaw, then to Hufflepuff and finally Slytherin, within one hour of the warning being sent, the whole school knew that RON WEASLEY needed a date to the Yule Ball.

Utter mayhem broke out in the halls of the school, girls were tackling boys demanding they take them to the ball, a couple of dire need seventh year girls found themselves begging a couple of first years to be their date. The Patil twins seeing Ron headed down the hall toward them quickly begged the Creevy brothers to be their dates.

Ron Weasley was oblivious to what was going on. He waddled his way back to the Dorm with his egg under his arm, wondering where the Veela was and how long it would take before she came to him to

beg to be his date. He knew he would string her along for a couple of days until finally agreeing.

Immediately after the class with McGonagall, Harry noticed Hermione looking at him expectantly. He stopped and looked into her brown eyes "M'Lady, though I must admit to not knowing how to dance, I would request that you accompany me to the Yule Ball. I promise to heal all foot wounds I might cause, if you but be upon my arm."

Hermione smiled. "Oh Harry, of course I will be your date. As long as I'm with you, it will be perfect." Of course Hermione Granger didn't account for Ron Weasley Tri-Wizard Champion.

A couple of nights later Harry awoke with a start. Something felt wrong, and only one thing came to mind, Hermione. He jumped out bed and grabbed his wand and glasses and rushed down the spiral staircase. He wasn't sure how he was going to get to the girl's dorm, but he would find a way. Fortunately upon arriving in the Common room he realized it wasn't necessary. Hermione was there, sitting in front of the fireplace, crying.

Harry walked over and sat down next to her. Hermione had a book in her hand, but she wasn't reading it. It actually looked like she wanted to throw it in the fireplace. Harry put his arm around her and pulled her to him. "What's wrong Hermione?" he asked.

Hermione loved the feel of his arms around her. She could feel the helplessness she had felt from the dream that had awoken her fade away. "I..I had a nightmare." She replied as she leaned her body into his, resting her head on his shoulder.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Harry asked as he buried his nose into her hair, smelling the vanilla smell he loved so much.

Hermione looked at the book she was holding, "I've been rereading this." She said and Harry looked at the title, 'A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens'. "I've always loved the story, but..." and tears started leaking into her eyes again.

"It's alright, I'm here and everything is alright." Harry said soothingly, "You know I would never let anything hurt you if I can help it."

"I know Harry." Hermione said. "But the dream was so real. I was visited by the three ghosts of Christmas and...and...it was horrible."

Harry just held his girlfriend, gently running his hand over her back, waiting for her to continue with her story.

"The ghost of Christmas past was one of my classmates from my school before I came here. " Hermione said. "She showed me the days where I was bullied and called names like geek and nerd and chipmunk at my old school. I never had friends, and it hurt when everyone kept talking about getting presents from this friend or that one, and I only got presents from family."

Harry knew how she felt. He hadn't even got presents from family, while his cousin got tons of them. He pulled Hermione a little tighter to him. "We have each other. You're my best friend and now my girlfriend."

"Then the Ghost of Christmas Present came and it was Ginny." Hermione continued the story. "But it wasn't as it is now, she showed me a Yule Ball where I'm with Victor Krum and you were the Champion and had Pavati as your date. I wanted to scream out that this isn't right, but I couldn't move or say anything. Then at that Yule Ball Ron started yelling, calling me a traitor and making a big fuss. Why Harry? Krum? You know I don't care about Quidditch. Why would I go to a ball with a Quidditch star?"

"Big surprise there about Ron, he probably was jealous Krum didn't ask him to the Ball." Harry said smiling at his girlfriend. "And at the real Yule Ball you will be on my arm and I will be on yours and the night will belong to us. Pavati? Why in the world would I ask Pavati, when the most beautiful lady in the castle is my girlfriend?"

Hermione smiled at Harry, but the scene from the finale of her nightmare passed in front of her eyes. "Then the Ghost of Christmas yet to come visited. She was a middle aged woman, called herself JK Rowking or something like that." Hermione found herself choking up, "It was horrible Harry. I was married to Ron and we had two kids and one of them was named Hugo. And you were there and were married to Ginny with three kids of your own. You even had one named Albus Severus."

"Now you know it was nothing but a nightmare Hermione." Harry said with a little laugh as he wiped a small tear from Hermione's cheek, "Could you imagine me with Ginny? And to name one of my kids after Snape? Albus Severus Potter huh? ASP like in a snake? Poor kid would be the first Potter ever to sorted into Slytherin. Speaking of initials, do you think Snape might have a first name that starts with an A and Severus is really his middle name?"

"An A? Why.." Then she started giggling as the joke fell into place. "You're terrible."

"Yes, but I can make my Mione laugh." Harry said. "Now are you feeling better? Or should I keep you here in my arms the rest of the night."

Hermione looked into Harry's emerald green eyes. "Much better Harry, thank you. But that nightmare really was so real. Maybe you better hold me for a while longer."

"I will hold you as long as you need me to." Harry said softly, "And to make sure that nightmare never comes true, promise me that if I ever have thoughts of dating Ginny or if I ever suggest that we name one of our children after that greasy hair git, you'll drag me to St. Mungo's for a full mental scan."

"Our children Harry?" Hermione asked looking up at him with a smile.

Harry blushed. "I..I can't think of anyone else I want in my life and hope..well someday..."

"Someday sounds extremely nice to me. " Hermione said giving Harry a kiss. "And you must promise that if I ever have a romantic thought about Ron or suggest Hugo as a name for one of our" Hermione blushed "children, you'll do the same and drag me off to St. Mungos?"

"I promise." Harry said as he pulled his girlfriend even closer and kissed her.

The two of them sat looking into the fire after a while Hermione asked. "Did you come down for a reason?"

"What you mean?"

"Well it is the middle of the night. I don't think you normally come down to the common room at this time every night do you?" Hermione asked then looking at Harry with a mischievous glint in her eyes, "Unless you secretly meet Ginny down here."

"What..of course not." Harry stammered, then seeing the mirth in Hermione's face, "I'll get you for that one."

"Promises, Promises." Hermione said. "So why did you come down."

"I..I woke up feeling something was, well something just felt wrong and all I could think of was you." Harry said. "I got worried and..."

Hermione smiled at Harry. "How could she be so lucky to have this wonderful person for a boyfriend. He's right It was a silly dream. Her with Ron?" She snorted in her thoughts. "That was simply ridiculous." She snuggled into Harry holding him tighter as she heard his heart beating one thought came to her mind and she need to say it. "Harry, I...I love you."

For the first time in his life, he heard three words that made his whole mind freeze, never before had anyone said those to him, looking into his girlfriend's eyes he could see the care she had for him, and he knew the same feelings existed in his own heart. "I love you too Mione."

"Mione?"

"Just wanted a special name for you. If you don't like...." Harry started.

Hermione put her finger on his lips to silence him, "Harry, coming from your lips almost any name you call me is wonderful."

Harry and Hermione talked some more but finally they drifted off to sleep while holding each other.

Ron Weasley was one of the first people down the steps the next morning with his golden egg under his arm. He was feeling hungry and wanted a good breakfast. He also secretly hoped the Veela chick was there so he could give her the chance to come beg him to take her to the ball. As he stepped off the steps into the common

room he saw two people curled up together on the loveseat. Harry and Hermione smiling contently as the dreamed of each other and future children not named Hugo or Albus Severus.

"PPPWWWTTTTPPPPPPWWWTTTT
PPPWWWTTTTPPPPPPWWWTTTT"

Far below in a partial rebuilt office, Barty Crouch Junior was pillaging supplies for his Polyjuice Potion when a small explosion ripped through the room. Fortunately he was only stunned for a few seconds before stamping off down the hall in a most desperate search for a shower.

%%%%%%%%%

It was December twenty first and Ginny Weasley was sitting on her bed crying. Pidwegeon had just delivered a letter from her mother. She read it again and a shudder ran through her body. She wanted to throw up. Life for Ginny Weasley was ending in just four days. As she laid on her bed wondering how life could be so cruel, an idea came to her. Could she do it? Could she swallow her pride? Give up her dream? But that's all it ever had been, a dream. Now it was time to face reality or she would never be able to face anyone again.

Two hours later she was sitting in the common room occasionally staring at the fire, occasionally rereading the letter from her mother. Finally the portrait hole opened and Harry and Hermione came through, smiles and laughter ranged out between the two of them. Ginny got up and walked meekly over to them.

"Hermione, uh Harry. Can I...uh talk to you? Please." She asked nervously.

Hermione glared at her ex best friend, then seeing the tear stained face and the nervous look she looked at Harry and with a nod she turned back to Ginny. "We can talk. What do you need?"

"Can we..uh go somewhere private?" Ginny asked. "I...I well it's something I don't want overheard."

Harry looked at his friend's sister for a few seconds. "Sure Ginny, but it better not be some kind of trick."

"I promise Harry. I need help and have no one else to turn to." Ginny replied. "We use to be friends."

Hermione nodded again and the three of them found their way to a deserted classroom. Harry and Hermione took seats next to each other and waited for Ginny to explain.

"I..I want to say I'm sorry." Ginny started. "Hermione you were my best friend. I just got jealous. You know I had a crush on Harry. But I know it was just a crush, and I can see you two are happy together. So I just want to say, I am sorry for threatening you."

"Is that all you wanted to say?" Hermione asked. "I appreciate the apology but it will take some time before I can forgive you. I need to make sure you are sincere."

"I..I know." Ginny murmured looking at the ground. "I really need help though, and I have no one to turn to. It's about Ron. Here this might explain my problem better." Ginny handed over the letter from her mother to Hermione.

Hermione took letter and read.

Ginny,

Your brother needs a partner for the Yule Ball and he says everyone is conspiring to keep him from getting a date because they are all jealous of him. I tried to get his Aunt Muriel to be his date, but she already has other plans. Ginny, you are going to have to be his date for the Ball.

Mum

Hermione handed the letter over to Harry who gasped after a few seconds of reading. She looked over at her ex best friend, and could see the tears welling up again in her eyes.

"I..I'll do anything you want me to do." Ginny said. "I'll give my witch's oath not to interfere with you two. I'll be your house elf for a week. ANYTHING! Just help me find Ron a date."

"Is it really that bad?" Harry asked.

"Worse." Ginny replied. "Every girl in the castle had a date or planned to go home within two hours of finding out Ron needed a partner to the Yule Ball. You do know the Patil twins are going with the Creevey brothers just so Ron wouldn't ask them?"

"But what can we do Ginny?" Hermione asked, then glaring at her friend, "You're not suggesting I go with him are you?"

"No..no of course not." Ginny shuddered at the thought. As arrogant as her brother could be, she really didn't want him turned into a pile of dragon dung by the end of the Yule Ball and Ginny was pretty sure that would be the outcome if Hermione went with him. "I was hoping, that maybe Harry could ask someone."

"I couldn't do that Ginny. You already said all the girls have made plans."

Ginny looked down as tears started coming down again, "I know. Even Moaning Myrtle is refusing to come out of her S-Bend until the Ball is over."

Harry felt sorry for Ginny. He knew the crush she had on him was really a fantasy her mother pushed, but there wasn't really...then a plan came to mind. "Hermione, do you think you could enchant a crystal ball?" and he explained what he had in mind.

Hermione remember the previous year, and readily agreed to Harry's plan. Ginny looked up hopefully. "Do you think you can do it?" she asked.

"Most likely. But Ginny what are you going to do about the Ball if you aren't going with Ron?" Hermione asked.

Ginny blushed nervously. "Neville asked me. I had said yes, but then I got the letter..."

"Don't tell Neville anything yet. We can't promise anything but we will try." Hermione said. "But it isn't that I don't trust you Ginny normally. But when it comes to Harry I really don't trust you. I will have to ask for that Oath."

Ginny nodded, then looking sadly at Harry, she pulled out her wand and raising it over her head. "I swear by my magic, that I Ginevra

Molly Weasley will never make any attempts to come between the relationship of Harry Potter and Hermione Granger so mote it be." A flash of light settled upon her.

Ginny looked solemnly at Hermione. "That is the best I can give. I can't swear not to want to be with him. I would lose my magic instantly. But I won't interfere."

Hermione nodded. "Now let's see what we can do about getting Ron a date."

%%%%%%%%%

Professor Trelawney came back from dinner the next day, after downing her fourth glass of her favorite cooking sherry she looked over at the crystal ball which was glowing. "One more gaze upon the..hic...future...before I rest my inner...hic...eye." She wandered over to the ball and looked into it. She blinked and looked again. "Oh my..but..one can not refute the...hic...inner eye, but I really wished I...hic..hadn't looked tonight."

%%%%%%%%%

Ginny came rushing over to Harry and Hermione the next day at lunch. "Oh Thank you, Thank you both." She gushed and then told the story of an extremely drunk Professor Trelawney cornering Ron in a Hallway and as she put it "I offer myself to the future the ...hic...gods...are forcing..hic..upon me. It's foretold..hic..I am to be your...hic...date to the Ball." Ginny said that then Professor Trelawney passed out at Ron's feet.

Ginny looked over at Hermione. "Thanks, you saved my social life."

Hermione nodded and taking Harry's hand. "Just remember your oath and we can work toward being friends again."

A/N I really need to write a couple of chapters for my Noble story. So it might be a couple of weeks before I get back to this one. Again thanks to all who are enjoying it.

It was the morning of Christmas Eve and Harry was in Gryffindor Common room sitting in his regular chair waiting for the woman he loved to join him for breakfast. "The woman I love." Harry thought. It had been less than two weeks since Hermione's nightmare when they had first spoken the four lettered L word to each other. It's a simple word that has given men an eternity of hope and dreams or cursed them to an eternity of despair and damnation. To Harry though, when that word was said for the first time by Hermione it was the end of a previous life and a beginning of a new one. He smiled to himself as he recognized the sound of her footsteps on the stairs, and looked up to see a sight he wanted to see every day for the rest of his life, his Mione, looking at him, smiling first thing in the morning.

"Good morning handsome." Hermione said as she saw her boyfriend in his favorite chair.

"Good morning gorgeous." He replied. "Ready for breakfast?"

"Before we go, can I ask you something?" Hermione asked.

"Of course."

"Well, the Yule Ball is tomorrow night..." Hermione started.

"What did I forget to do?" Harry asked nervously. "Was I supposed to get you something or...."

"Oh no Harry nothing like that." Hermione said. "Its well you said you didn't know how to dance and I have never been dancing, but I thought it was going to be just a, you know dance dance where you can just sort of dance however you want. But I heard Angelina talking to Katie yesterday and it's going to be a lot more formal than that. They were talking about the first part of the ball will have formal dances like the Waltz and such."

Harry's face paled. "I..I don't know how to do that. I'm sorry Hermione; I'm going to embarrass you."

"Of course you won't Harry." Hermione replied. "I don't know how to dance like that either."

"We could just not dance." Harry said with a hopeful look on his face.
"We could sit and watch everyone else."

Hermione's expression turned sad, "Well we could do that but I was hoping maybe you'd try something with me."

"ANYTHING, JUST SMILE AGAIN!" Harry's inner voice screamed.
"I'd do anything for you love."

Hermione's face lit up in a smile again and she started toward the steps, then turning back she said "Wait here, I'll be right back." She quickly dashed up the steps and brought back a book. "I stopped by the library yesterday to see if there was anyway...well to learn to dance."

Harry smiled, this was definitely his Mione. Need to know about an evil creature that might be petrifying people, go to the library, need to find out who Nicholas Flammel is go to the library, need to know how to dance, go the library. "Someday," Harry promised himself, "I'll build a library for her and fill with every book she could ever want just to see the smile on her face." He saw she was looking apprehensively at him, "How can we learn to dance in a day?"

"Magic of course." Hermione replied as her radiant smile reappeared.
"There is a charm in here that will guide your body, feet and arms to the correct positions for the dance."

"So we just use the Charm tomorrow night and we'll be able to Waltz?" Harry asked, "That's not so bad."

"We uh could, but then we would look like robots as our bodies are jerked around." Hermione replied. "No, what the book suggests is you use the spell to practice with, as it keeps moving you around, you should be able to start anticipating the next move until eventually you don't need the charm at all. You'll just react to the music."

"That doesn't sound so bad." Harry replied. "How long would we need to practice?"

"Well it says we should be able to make it work in about ten hours worth of practice." Hermione said looking hopefully at Harry.

"Ten hours? No way. Not going to happen." Harry said very determinedly. "There is no way I am going to spend ten hours learning a dance I'll only use for fifteen minutes at most." Harry thought. Of course two hours later he was in an empty classroom being jerked around like a possessed demon while learning how to dance because the love of his life, the woman of his dreams had looked at him with her almond colored eyes and said the most despicable thing a man can hear when he's disagreeing with a woman. "Please?"

%%%%%%%%%

Hermione awoke Christmas morning to find several presents at the foot of her bed. The first was from her parents. That made her a little sad. This had been the first Christmas she hadn't gone home for the holidays. "Next year," she thought, "maybe Harry can spend Christmas with me and my parents." The thought of Harry sitting next to her in her home opening gifts made her smile. She opened the card attached to the box and smiled as she read the Christmas card. It was a beautiful poem about Christmas and love. She also found a gift certificate to her favorite non-magical bookstore in the card. She smiled. "I know where my first stop will be on the way home for the summer." She looked at the box the card was attached to. By the weight of it, she knew it was going to be more books. She was quite surprised when she unwrapped and open the box, the find it filled with weights, surrounding a much smaller box. Puzzled Hermione opened the smaller box where she found a gorgeous pair of diamond earrings.

A note was enclosed with the earrings; she unfolded it and read, "A princess can't go to a ball without something special to wear for someone special."

Hermione looked at the earrings and smiled. "Thanks Mom and Dad" she whispered. Then she thought "Someone special? Had they figured out from my letters about Harry?" She had been writing home about Harry for over three years, but had specifically not mentioned their relationship to them in letters this year. She thought about her plan to kiss Harry in front of her parents at Kings Crossing when they got there for the summer break before telling them of their new relationship status. She shook off the thoughts and turned back to her presents. She quickly opened the other gifts from relatives that her parents had forwarded to the castle, and finally she

came to the present she waited until last to open, Harry's. She was curious to know how much effort he had put in to pick the right gift. She thought back to her nightmare of being with Ron and laughed. She'd end up with Quidditch books and Chocolate Frogs on her anniversary if it was him. Just so he could have them himself. Her fingers actually trembled as she undid the bow on Harry's gift and when the paper was off she was holding a small box. When she opened it she found herself looking at a beautiful diamond necklace shaped like a heart. The note in the box read,

Mione love,

I hope this matches whatever you're wearing tonight. I heard that a diamond is a girl's best friend, and since you have always been my best friend, I hope this always reminds you of me.

Love

Harry

As Hermione looked at the gorgeous necklace she suddenly realized something, pulling back out the earring from her parents, she noticed the settings matched. "How?" She thought and then realized her boyfriend had owed her parents in planning her Christmas presents. "At least now I know how they know about Harry. And they called him someone special." She thought as she smiled. She had a feeling this was going to be a Christmas day to remember.

Hermione did notice one thing that caused her to pause, there had not been a gift from her other friend Ron.

%%%%%%%%%

Harry awoke very suddenly on Christmas Day. Wondering what had caused his abrupt return to consciousness; he opened his eyes, and saw something with very large, round, green eyes staring back at him in the darkness, so close they were almost nose to nose.

"Dobby!" Harry yelled, scrambling away from the elf so fast he almost fell out of bed. "Don't do that!"

"Dobby is sorry, sir!" squeaked Dobby anxiously, jumping backward with his long fingers over his mouth. "Dobby is only wanting to wish Harry Potter 'Merry Christmas' and bring him a present, Sir! Harry Potter did say Dobby could come and see him sometimes, sir!"

Harry remembered the time three weeks ago when Hermione had stumbled on to Dobby in the kitchens and drug Harry down there. Harry had been happy to see his friend the house-elf and had been glad to find out he was now working at Hogwarts.

It's okay," said Harry, still breathing rather faster than usual, while his heart rate returned to normal. "Just - just prod me or something in future, all right, don't bend over me like that. .."

"Can Dobby give Harry Potter his present now?" The house-elf asked.

"Course you can," said Harry. "Er. . . I've got something for you too."

It was a lie; he hadn't bought anything for Dobby at all, but he quickly opened his trunk and pulled out a particularly knobbly rolled-up pair of socks. They were his oldest and foulest, mustard yellow, and had once belonged to Uncle Vernon. The reason they were extra-knobbly was that Harry had been using them to cushion his Sneakoscope for over a year now. He pulled out the Sneako-scope and handed the socks to Dobby, saying, "Sorry, I forgot to wrap them..."

But Dobby was utterly delighted. "Socks are Dobby's favorite, favorite clothes, sir!" he said, ripping off his odd ones and pulling on Uncle Vernon's. "I has seven now, sir. . . . But sir ..." he said, his eyes widening, having pulled both socks up to their highest extent, so that they reached to the bottom of his shorts, "they has made a mistake in the shop, Harry Potter, they is giving you two the same!"

Harry looked confused for a second then said "You're right Dobby. Next time I'm in Hogsmeade I'll get a second pair and you can have two sets."

Dobby's overly large eyes started to water as he handed a small package to Harry, "Harry Potter is too kind. He is noble and selfless..."

Harry had opened the package and found – socks!

"Dobby is making them himself, sir!" the elf said happily. "He is buying the wool out of his wages, sir!"

The left sock was bright red and had a pattern of broomsticks upon it; the right sock was green with a pattern of Snitches.

"They're . . . they're really . . . well, thanks, Dobby," said Harry, and he pulled them on, causing Dobby's eyes to leak with happiness again.

"Dobby must go now, sir, we is already making Christmas dinner in the kitchens!" said Dobby, and he hurried out of the dormitory.

Harry looked over at Ron who was still snoring away. Then he turned back to the presents on the foot of the bed and started to open them. Sirius sent him a pen knife with attachments that would open any lock and undo any knot. The Dursley's sent a single tissue; Hagrid sent a huge assortment of sweets including all Harry's favorites: Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans, Chocolate Frogs, Drooble's Best Blowing Gum, and Fizzing Whizbees. Harry noticed there was no present from Ron before he turned to the one he was most eager to see. The one from Hermione. He opened the box to find a complete set of Quidditch seeker Armor, along with a note.

Harry,

You're too special to me to allow anything to happen to you. I can't be with you on your broom to protect you when you're too stubborn to realize Quidditch is just a game. Hopefully when you wear this, it will remind you of my love and just how much you mean to me. Just remember that I can't be in your arms when you're in the Hospital wing.

Love

Mione (only for you Harry)

Harry looked at the armor and smiled. She knew exactly what I wanted even without me even knowing. "Best Christmas present ever." He thought.

%%%%%%%%%

Cedric Diggory awoke on Christmas morning to find the vast assortment of gifts as he was accustomed too. Presents from his parents, one from Cho, more gifts from admiring women but there was one that didn't have a name on it. When he finally opened it he found a wand cleaning kit, and a note.

Hope we can use this together sometime.

Your Fellow Champion,

Ron

Cedric immediately found an urgent need to shower. It was thirty minutes later when his fellow Hufflepuffs finally convinced him to come out of the water.

%%%%%%%%%

Ron awoke and immediately attacked his presents. He got his yearly jumper from his mother, a box of chocolate frogs her Hermione, a book called Quidditch Teams of Britain and Ireland from Harry, a box of box creams from the Twins. He didn't think twice about getting presents from Harry and Hermione and he not giving them any. He was too busy with the tournament to worry about such things. He knew they would understand. He looked at the box of creams the twin had given him. "Like I would eat them." Ron thought as his hand reached for one and put it in his mouth. A quick Canary change and molt later and he was ready to get dressed and head downstairs, well right after one more cream.

%%%%%%%%%

Harry and Hermione spent the morning after breakfast and a quick check to make sure they remembered the dance steps expressing how they appreciated each other's presents, though most of the expressing came non-verbally. It was during one of these non-verbal expressions that Ron appeared in the common room.

"Pbrrrrrp'

Harry didn't even look up from the kiss. "Good Morning Ron." He said as he stared into Hermione's eyes.

'Pbrrrrrp'

"Anything we can do about that this evening love?" Harry whispered to Hermione

"Maybe a silencing charm?" She answered quietly.

"I'll leave it in your capable hands love." Harry picked up one of her hands and ran a finger over her palm and then gently brushed his lips over it as he continued to stare into her eyes causing shivers to run throughout her body.

The Twins were sitting at a table watching their brother eat another cream and turn into a Canary again. Fred turned to George. "That compulsion charm really worked well."

"Yeah but now he'll eat them all before tonight." George replied.

"True, but it's still fun to watch now."

At noon they went down to the Great Hall to a magnificent lunch, which included at least a hundred turkeys and Christmas puddings, and large piles of Cribbage's Wizarding Crackers. After lunch Harry and Hermione joined the Weasley twins, Neville and Ginny for a snowball fight. Hermione refused to play at first, but Harry gave her his patented puppy dog eyes look and she relented. Unfortunately for everyone else, she proved she was deadly accurate with her banishing charms and soon everyone was being chased by her snowballs.

Ron made an appearance at four in the afternoon carrying his egg. Unfortunately for him he gave the egg a kiss before he was going to set it down and join the fight. His lips stuck to the cold metal surface of the egg. Everyone remembering where the egg had been in its short life refused to do anything to help. Ron found himself walking to the Gryffindor tower trying to hide the egg stuck to his face while waiting for it to warm up enough to come off.

%%%%%%%%%

At Five O'clock Hermione excused herself saying it was time to start getting ready to go to the ball.

"Three hours to get ready love?" Harry asked in surprise.

Hermione leaned over and whispered in his ear, "It'll be worth it. I promise." Then with another kiss she ran up the stairs to her dorm.

%%%%%%%%%

Harry made his way up to his dorm at six, a quick shower and quickly donned his shirt, pants, tie and dress robes. As he was heading back out of the dorm, Ron entered with lips so red it looked like he was wearing lipstick.

"Uh.." Harry started. "You need to get ready quickly Ron. Ball starts in a half hour."

"I'll be fine Harry." Ron said, "I'm a Champion remember, they can't start without me."

"Fine. Well we'll see you at the Ball." Harry said, he then left the dorm and headed for the common room shaking his head.

%%%%%%%%%

Down the in Slytherin Common room, Millicent was putting the final touches on her fiancé. "Now Draco darling, stop fidgeting with your bandages, love. You know Madam Pomfrey says you shouldn't scratch them."

Draco was lost in thought. How had his life plummeted so far, so fast? A couple of months ago, he was the undisputed king of Slytherin. He had the looks, he had the money, he had a betrothed on his arm who would have made a fine wife. Now he couldn't look in a mirror without being revolted as his eyes constantly were drawn to his missing eyebrow. He knew somehow it was Potter's fault. "Potter and his Mudblood..." Unfortunately for that part he had spoken out loud.

WHAM! Millicent's right hand connected with Draco's jaw. "I TOLD YOU NOT TO INSULT THEM!" then she looked around the common room in panic expecting the smell to arrive any second.

"What'd you do that for, I just called her a Mud..."

WHAM! Millicent's left hand connected this time. She picked her fiancé off the floor, and looked in the only eye he could still open. "Are you going to do it again?"

Draco just shook his head in fear.

"Excellent love, now pick up your teeth and go see if Madam Pomfrey can fix them before the ball OK love." Millicent said. "I'll meet you outside the Great Hall." She smiled at her fiancé. "I am so looking forward to our wedding. It's going to be beautiful isn't it dear?"

Draco just nodded as he retrieved the three missing teeth from the floor and made his way out of the common room. Instead of the Hospital Wing he instead headed toward Professor's Snape's office. He hoped his head of house could talk to his father for him. Plead with him to get him out of the Betrothal contract. It was just one more opportunity for Karma to kick his arse once more.

Harry and Neville were pacing nervously waiting for their respective dates to make their appearance down the steps.

"I'm going to make a fool of myself Harry." Neville said. "Why did I ever ask Ginny?"

"You'll be fine Neville." Harry replied, thinking he might make a fool of himself as well. "Just have confidence."

It was then that Hermione made her appearance and all of Harry's thoughts quickly vacated all parts of his brain. He even forgot to breathe for a minute. Though by the pounding of his heart in his chest, he knew at least it was still beating. "Her...mi..ne?" he uttered though a mouth that was hanging open. Dressed in periwinkle blue dress robes, and with her hair sleek and shiny and twisted in an elegant knot on her head, Harry was certain that Hermione was the most gorgeous woman he had ever laid eyes on. She was wearing her diamond earrings, and around her neck was the diamond necklace he had given her, but the most dazzling, the most sparkling treasure emanating from Hermione was her smile. It was another

minute before his mouth finally closed, and brain function to return. He made is way over to his girlfriend. "You...You're gorgeous."

She smiled at Harry, "Was the three hours worth it Harry?"

"Uh...yeah." He stammered as his mouth was still having trouble maintaining a closed position.

It was then they both heard the voice they dreaded. "Hermione, can you do something..." Ron had started as he came down into the common room. It was at that moment he saw Hermione standing next to Harry.

"PPPWWWTTTTPPPPPPWWWTTTT
PPPWWWTTTTPPPPPPWWWTTTT"

%%%%%%%%%

Down in Professor's Snape office, Draco and his head of house were discussing how it would be impossible for Snape to act on the young Slytherin's behalf. Nobody would ever consider Severus Snape an idiot; cruel, cunning, and unable to lose a grudge yes, but stupid no. While his office was being rebuilt, he realized having his desk so far away from the door was a mistake, especially with all of the possible harmful potions he had and would accumulate again. It was this fact and this fact only that allowed him to escape when the familiar scent of rotting corpses covered in sulfur made its way into his overly large proboscis. He had just pulled Draco to the door when the flash flame and explosion occurred throwing both of the previous occupants against the far wall. Frustration poured out of the Potions Master as he yelled "OH, JUST BUGGER ME!" It was most unfortunate for him to use that particular expression considering the exact position Draco Malfoy had landed due to the explosion.

Crabbe and Goyle were walking down the hall toward Professor's Snape's office at the time of the explosion, when they rounded the corner; they found Draco Malfoy lying on top of their Potions Master who was screaming "OH, JUST BUGGER ME!" They looked at each other and disappeared the way they had come. It didn't take long before the news of a love affair between Professor Snape and Draco Malfoy made its way around the school. (A/N: Just to clarify, nothing

actually happened, just misread circumstances by two of the three biggest idiots in the school.)

Back up in the Gryffindor Common room Ron was pleading with Hermione to help get rid of the frill on his dress robes.

"Honestly Ron, I'm nervous about the ball, look at how my hand is shaking." She held up her hand. "Do you really want me to do a severing charm so close to your neck?"

Though most of the other people who had gathered in the common room were desperately hoping the champion would still let her try, the single brain cell existing in Ron's head not dedicated to chess or eating made it's voice heard and with a shake of his head he ran back up the steps. Hermione did cast her most powerful silencing charm at his backside before he could entirely disappear. Up in the boy's dorm Ron started casting the severing spell himself. The results were disastrous as strings of frill were dangling from every part of his dress robes and no matter what he did, the outfit was more dress than robes. By the time the youngest Champion made it back down to the common room everyone else was gone. Everyone had left except a ginger colored cat who had been lying in a common room chair. When Ron passed the chair, the sight of all of the strings dangling from his robes were too much for the part kneazle. Crookshanks launched himself at a particular long string. Ron did not feel the slight tug and continued out of the common room, with one of the two threads which held together the main seam up the back of the ancient robes together being left behind.

%%%%%%%%%

Professor Sibyll Trelawney had finished her third bottle of cooking sherry before donning her custom made robes and heading off toward the Great Hall. "Time to await my fate..uh..date." She thought.

She was standing at the bottom of the Grand Staircase when she first saw her date. His Robes in tatters and his lips were bright red? Sibyll made a desperate attempt at vanishing but before she could turn around he had spotted her and had made it too her side.

Ron looked at his date's robes and the only word to describe them was shawly. It appeared at least forty different shawls had been sewn together to create an interesting ensemble of clashing colors

and patterns. On top of the Dress Robes were Trelawney's multitude of chains and beads and on each arm were at least a dozen different bangles.

"Wow and I thought my dress robes were bad." Ron said as an attempt at a polite opening remark to his date.

Sibyll hadn't really been paying attention to his words and really on heard -My dress robes were bad-. "I agree with you Ronald. It's quite bad." She replied.

It was at that moment the Champions were called to wait aside while the rest of the school entered the Great Hall.

Once everyone else was settled in the Hall, Professor McGonagall told the champions and their partners to get in line in pairs and to follow her. They did so, and everyone in the Great Hall applauded as they entered and started walking up toward a large round table at the top of the Hall, where the judges were sitting. Though once the applause had died down, laughter and giggles broke out throughout the Hall. Ron knew the laughter was toward his date and her ugly Dress Robes. "How could she embarrass me like this?" He thought.

The walls of the Hall had all been covered in sparkling silver frost, with hundreds of garlands of mistletoe and ivy crossing the starry black ceiling. The House tables had vanished; instead, there were about a hundred smaller, lantern-lit ones, each seating about a dozen people.

Harry and Hermione were sitting at a table with Neville and Ginny, Fred and George Weasley and their dates Angelina and Alicia Spinnet and rounding out the dozen the Patil twins along with the Creevy brothers who were spending more time staring at Harry than at their dates.

Back up at the Champion's table Ron had ended up sitting next to his brother Percy who had explained his boss was suffering from too much of personal shock to attend. He had been promoted to Mr. Crouch's assistant and was there representing him. Ron really didn't hear a word he had since his entire focus was on the plate in front of him. "Where's the food?" He wondered. He saw Cedric at the other end of the table and yelled out "Hey Cedric, did you get my present to you? Want to get together after the Ball and polish our wands

together?" Cedric's fork fell out of his hand and rattled upon his plate as he looked at his date Cho Chang. Ron realized his error. "Sorry, you're with Cho tonight. Well if she wants to help you polish your wand tonight, that's fine. How about you and I next week?"

Cho wanted to disappear under the table as all eyes had turned to her. Her eyes turned to her boyfriend's eyes questioningly. Cedric just shook his head.

Ron looked down and there was still no food on his plate. He failed to notice others looking at the menu sitting beside the plate and asking for something particular, he just kept staring and waiting. Finally Professor Trelawney explained the menu to an utter confused look on her date's face. Finally after the fourth attempt at an explanation she was reasonable certain he got the procedure.

Ron looked at the menu and then spoke plainly to his plate "Everything!" and he waited but no food came. Again he tried a bit louder this time "EVERYTHING!" and again no food appeared. He turned to Sibyll. "Mine's broke." She reached into one of her many pockets sewn into her robes and pulled out a bottle of cooking sherry and after a few swigs directly from the bottle, she turned back to her date. "No You have to ask for it by the name on the menu."

"Oh." Ron looked back at his plate. "Chicken." And this time his plate filled with chicken, potatoes and corn. "Cool." Then looking back at the menu he continued. "Pork Chops, Steak, Bass, and another Chicken." When he finished his plate was filled up to his chin with food, which immediately tumbled down onto the table covering everyone in bits of food.

"Stupid plate." Ron said then turning to the other champions, "I mean have you seen anything this stupid. How are you supposed to get enough to eat?" He then stabbed at a little red potato that had rolled in front of Fleur and stuffed it in his mouth.

Dumbledore swept his wand and the mess was cleared away instantly.

"Hey that was my food. I was going to eat that." Ron cried out.

"May I suggest one plate at a time Mr. Weasley?" Dumbledore said.

"But what if they run out?" Ron whined.

"I assure you they won't."

Seventeen plates of food later and Dumbledore wasn't positive anymore if the food would last. Fortunately the rest of the Champion's table had stopped eating pretty quickly and turned slightly green at the sight of the youngest Champion's eating habits. Dumbledore noticed Ron had stopped using his utensils shortly after the second plate and had just started grabbing it all with his hands. Finally Ron finished his last plate and said "That was good. What's for dessert?"

"Uh..I think it's time we start the dance Mr. Weasley." Dumbledore said. "If I could have all the Champions head to the dance floor it would be appreciated."

Everyone rose from the table and Ron quickly wiped his hands on his robes. The grease blended in with the fourteen other gravy and other food stains already present.

It was on the first note of the Champions dance when it happened. Ron's size thirteen left foot (which showed everyone in Hogwarts who had witnessed the first task that there was no correlation between size of feet and other parts of the body) came down painfully on Sibyll Trelawney's right foot, as she bent down to grab it, his other size thirteen foot descended onto her left hand. Madam Pomfrey was quickly called over to heal the six broken bones in her foot and the two others in her hand. Madam Pomfrey was about to give her a clean bill of health when she noticed the pleading look in Professor Trelawney's eyes. "Maybe you better sit out for a while." She advised.

"Great." Ron thought. "Now I can't show everyone how well I can dance."

At eight forty-five the switching spell employed by Hermione on the contract switched points of exchange. The air to be exchanged now was a windowless portion of the castle three stories up. Hermione had picked that spot in particular because it was safe.

The second dance of the evening was a Waltz and Harry led Hermione on to the floor. The hours of practice paid off, and the two of them glided over the floor effortlessly. Staring into each other's eyes the movements were second nature to them by now, until the magic spotlight was focused entirely on them. Neither of them noticed, as they were lost into each other.

Ron was still grumbling when the spotlight fell upon the Boy-who-lived and his date in her diamonds and periwinkle robes.

"ssssssssss sssssssssssssss sssssssssssssss"

Silent, but it still lifted the youngest champion six inches off his chair before he fell back down. The expelling air disintegrated the last remaining thread holding the back of his robes together and in the still night air outside a stagnate cloud hung right outside a castle wall.

For the next hour Harry and Hermione glided gracefully upon the dance floor and the cloud outside the castle became thicker and thicker. Ron appeared to be jumping up and down in his seat. Finally the dancing couple needed to catch a breather and get something to drink. They made their way back to their table where Neville and Ginny were sitting talking quietly.

Harry disappeared in search of a couple of butter beers and when he returned Victor Krum had walked up to his date. Remembering Hermione's dream he stared at the internationally famous Quidditch star in confusion.

"Herm-mi-ne-ne?" Krum asked.

"Hermione." She responded. "Victor Krum right?"

"Yes." The Quidditch star responded. "I see you lots in library. Everyone says you are very smart."

Hermione blushed causing Harry to look at Krum in a suspicious manner. He put out his own hand. "And I'm Harry Potter, Hermione's boyfriend."

"Yes, yes. I know your story. You two dance very vell together. Vished you hadn't got hurt. Think you vould have been better challenge as champion." Krum replied shaking Harry's hand, then

turning back to Hermione. "I want to ask question. My date, her name is Luna," he nodded over to the dirty blonde haired girl twirling alone on the dance floor with her eyes unfocused. "She mentions creatures I never heard of. Makes me feel like Durmstrang doesn't teach well. I want to know if you can tell me what a Crumple-Horn Snorkack or a Blibbering Humdinger is? She keeps avoiding mistletoes saying they have Nargles, but I have no idea what Nargles are. What if they're dangerous? We obviously have very bad magical creature instructor at my school. I'm afraid I'm going to look stupid in front of my date."

Ginny had her hand in front of her mouth while trying to hold in a laugh. Before Hermione could reply to Krum's question Ginny spoke up. "Luna is our resident expert on those particular creatures and they aren't widely known. I'm sure if you ask her about them she'll be glad to explain them to you. May I ask how you ended up asking her to the Ball?"

"Thank you, I will ask her. I'm glad to know they aren't very common. As for asking her, it was the strangest thing, shortly after they announced the Ball I found her huddled in the bow of our ship. She was mumbling something about escaping the wrackspurts and veasels." Krum explained. "I felt sorry for her and we started talking. I told her I didn't want to ask anyone to the dance because the girls were always following me around, she told me she couldn't go without being asked since she was only third year." Krum scratched his head as he thought back, "Some how in our conversation I ended up asking her to go with me."

Ron saw Krum talking to Harry and Hermione and knew the Quidditch star who much prefer his company over them got out of his chair and hurried over. As he was getting close, he saw Krum turn to Harry and say "Cedric tells me you are wonderful seeker. Best the school has seen in years. Would you like to go out flying sometime."

"sssss ssssss ssssss sssss"

"Sure." Harry said holding his hand out to Krum again right as the air propelled Ron slammed into the Durmstrang Champion knocking them both to the ground. Harry bent over and helped Krum to his feet.

As Ron got to his knees all the people who had turned in the direction of the commotion was instantly reminded of the first task. The rear of Ron's robes were split in two clearly showing that Ron Weasley - Triwizard Champion was starkers under his robes. It took the band several minutes to regroup and start playing again. Many dancers had to leave the floor due to queasy stomachs.

Ron didn't seem to notice the extra airy situation in the rear of him so as he recovered his feet he held out his hand to Krum "I would love to fly with you and hey we can polish wands together sometime before the second task. Maybe next week when Cedric and..." his voice trailed off as he watched Krum turn and quickly make his way back to Luna's side.

Ron turned to Harry, "Why'd you have to scare him away? You know how much I wanted to talk to him." He turned in disgust and went back to his date.

When Ron made it back to his date's side at the Champion's table, he turned to her, "What if we took a stroll in the garden."

Sibyll had had a good view of her date's ass-ets as he was kneeling on the floor. Her stomach suddenly could take no more and she promptly threw up. "Sorry, but I don't think something I ate agreed with me. I think I should head back to my tower."

"Sure I'll walk you up and maybe we can finish the party there."

"NO! I mean no, I think I feel even sicker than that. Maybe I should go to the hospital wing and rest in one of those beds until Madam Pomfrey can take a look at me." Trelawney said and hurried out of the Great Hall before Ron could volunteer to help her.

Ron just sat in his chair the rest of the evening watching Harry and Hermione dance the evening away grumbling under his breath how unfair it was.

%%%%%%%%%

The gardens of Hogwarts had been put under a warming spell for the night to allow couples to wander around in their dresses and cloaks without undue chills.

Harry and Hermione wandered out of the Great Hall and into the Rose Garden. Smiling and chatting about their wonderful evening. The path, alit by fairy lights meandered past fountains, flower bushes which had been enchanted to sprout their flowers for the evening and ornamental statues. Other couples were sitting on benches spread out along the path. Their journey ended at an empty bench located near one of the most beautiful fountains. Harry sat down and pulled Hermione close as the two enjoyed the serenity of the garden.

"It's been a very beautiful evening Harry." Hermione whispered. "I don't ever want it to end."

"Mione love, I never thought a dance would be something I would enjoy." Harry replied. "But with you, how could I not." His emerald eyes affixed on hers. He reached out a finger and traced it along her jaw line, urging her lips to turn toward him. Harry's lips made the final decent touching hers lightly, and again, the kiss grew, the lips parted, tongues danced, bodies melted, seconds became minutes and the two of them were lost in their own separate world. Neither heard the approach of another pair of footsteps.

Fleur Delacour and Roger Davies were following the same path Harry and Hermione and traversed a few minutes previous. The lovely silvery blonde haired Veela was looking for a convenient reason to get rid of her drooling date. As they neared a large fountain she saw a raven haired boy kissing a brown haired girl. "I recognize zat 'air. Zat's 'arry Potter." She thought. "Ze boy who lived. Zat would be a good conquest of ze night. 'E 'as to be powerful if what Cedric said about 'im killing a basilisk. I'll make 'im mine." She thought of the things she would teach the young wizard and none of it had anything to do with magic or at least not that type of magic.

"Excuse me, aren't you 'Arry Potter?" Fleur asked the young man who was still engrossed in the young witch by his side. When neither of them seemed to notice her, she became a little irate. " 'Ow dare zey ignore me." Fleur thought. "I'll just get 'is attention and turn on my allure. 'E'll be mine in an instant." Fleur walked over to the couple of tapped them on the shoulder. " 'Arry Potter?" as the young man broke the kiss with his girlfriend, Fleur blasted him with every bit of Allure she could muster. Roger Davies caught in the Allure just sat

down and stared at the angel before him, his mouth was agape and drool poured down the front of his robes.

When Harry turned away to see who was interrupting one of the most blissful moments of his life, his eyes fell upon a petite silvery blonde haired woman and he felt a floating sensation giving him immense pleasure, all of his thoughts were swept away except a desire to please this woman any way he could. When Harry thought back later he knew it felt almost exactly like the imperious curse Moody had put them under earlier in the year. "Kiss the woman and all that you desire will be yours." A voice in his head said. "You want her. Impress her. Make her yours." He rose from his seat, and started moving toward this perfect entity. Then from a deeper portion of his mind came a more demanding voice. "Hermione, you love Hermione, she is your anchor, your life, your love. HERMIONE!" The last word was verbal as it ripped from Harry's lips. As soon as it did his mind instantly cleared and he jumped back from the woman in front of him.

Hermione saw the Veela Triwizard Champion when she tapped both of them on the shoulder. She saw her boyfriend turn and go glassy eyed as he faced the blonde. She saw Harry get up from beside her and move toward the Veela, she saw him start to reach for the female intruder, his lips preparing to kiss her and then she Harry's eyes open wide and her name screamed out from him and he moved quickly away from Beauxbaton Champion. At first she had been hurt, Harry had abandoned her at the sight of the woman, the Veela. Then seeing Roger Davies drooling over himself she realized what had happened. "That...that..bitch just tried to steal my Harry." She thought. She pulled out her wand and pointed it at Fleur. "Get away from my boyfriend." She said dangerously.

"Ha, you think he prefers you to me." Fleur said tossing her perfect hair.

By then Harry had moved to stand beside Hermione trying to figure out exactly what had just happened.

"Looks like he does prefer me you hag." Hermione snarled. "Get your boyfriend stealing ass out of my sight before I do something you'll regret."

"You think you can do something to me?" Fleur asked. "If I want your boyfriend I'll take 'im. Zere's nothing you can do about it. I'm perfect, I'm a Veela. Every man wants me."

"BANG" a brown light came out of Hermione's wand hitting Fleur right in the face.

"There....see how perfect you are now." Hermione said. She pulled out a mirror and tossed it to the blonde.

Fleur looked into the mirror and found her face breaking out in a multitude of pimples. "Zat's not possible. Veela can't get acne. We 'ave perfect skin."

"Used to have perfect skin it looks like." Hermione smirked. "I think you will find you have eighty seven pimples at this moment, each resistant to magical treatment. I'll warn you that if you try to treat them magically they will erupt and your face will have more craters than the moon. Let them heal naturally and you'll be fine. Now get out of my sight and keep your paws off my boyfriend."

Fleur was ticked. "This..this..bitch has stolen my beauty. And she thinks that she could keep a man I want?" She felt the anger rise and her blood boil soon she felt her transformation start. "In a second I'll ram a fireball up her..."

"PETRIFICUS TOTALUS" Hermione yelled, and Fleur's eyes widened as fell over stiff as a board. Hermione walked over to the Beauxbaton witch. Who was staring up with hatred in her eyes. "You want to transform? Then let me help you. ACCIO CANARY CREAMS." She said.

From various locations the packages of the Weasley made candy came zooming toward her. Hermione ripped open three packages and shoved them into the mouth of the Veela. She performed another spell which liquefied the candy and then she performed the counter curse to the body bind.

Fleur rose to her feet and started to pull her own wand until she realized her hand was a wing, and was covered in yellow feathers, her beautiful legs were now bird like and her nose had become a beak, not her normal harpie type beak but a beak of a Canary. She looked around at her date for help. She hadn't counted on the

effects her allure would have when coupled with the transformation into a canary. Roger Davies eyes had shifted from a look of lust to a look of hunger. He hadn't eaten much at the ball since his fork had kept missing his mouth and as he stared at Fleur, now for some reason he suddenly had a desire to find out what Canary tasted like.

Fleur saw her date lick his lips and start toward her. She didn't like the look in his eyes "TA WEET TA WEET." And she took off running toward the Beauxbaton Carriage followed closely by Davies. As she passed other couples, the male of each one started getting looks of hunger in their eyes and followed Davies in his pursuit of the overly large Veela Canary. Just short of the carriage, she transformed back. Unfortunately Fred and George still had not corrected the molting problem and the Zit face filled Veela was standing surrounded by two dozen young men all looking at her 'natural beauty'.

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Rita Skeeter had been flitting around all evening and had several juicy stories. There was the story of Hagrid being half giant, and another where a student Champion was dating a professor and she finally she had stumbled on the Beauxbaton Champion trying to use her Veela powers to get with the boy-who-lived. "Oh yes, tomorrow's prophet is going to be several articles with my name on them." She thought as she flew away from the garden. Unfortunately for the reporter turned beetle, her path of flight to exit the Hogwarts grounds took her near a windowless wall where an invisible cloud hung. The stench instantly paralyzed her and she plummeted toward the ground. A fairly intelligent spider lived near the base of that wall. The spider had noticed over the course of the last month of so, periodically an enormous amount of insects fell to the ground in this spot. The spider had erected a large web and caught the insects that fell from the sky. At first he thought they were all poisonous with the smell that emanated from them, but quickly discovered if left along for a few days the smell left the insects and they were eatable once again. Rita Skeeter hit that web that night. The spider noticed the smell emanating from this beetle was worse than any he had ever dealt with before. "Must be one of those Dung Beetles I heard about." He thought and he quickly wrapped the foul smelling creature in a cocoon of spider silk.

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Hermione turned back to her messy haired green eyed boyfriend after she watched the Veela Canary make a beeline out of the garden. "Oh Harry." She cried wrapping her arms around him. "You...you were able to fight off a Veela for me. How?"

"I don't know love." Harry answered. "My mind fogged over and there was a voice in my head saying I should kiss her but then a much louder voice broke through telling me it's you I love. When I concentrated on you, all thoughts of her went away."

Hermione tighten her grip on Harry. She knew what that meant. She knew he really did love her. Only true love can break Veela magic. She remembered their conversation earlier in the month. "Someday definitely sounded extremely nice." She thought, and as much as she tried not to, she found herself looking at her left ring finger thinking of a future when there would be a ring there, a ring placed there by the man she was holding. "Look at me." She thought. "I'm getting as bad as Ginny. No, not really" She reminded herself, "I know he loves me." Then she looked one more time at her finger and smiled, "Someday." She rested her head on his shoulder and they just stood there holding each other to the sound of the fountain, their hearts dancing together to a song unheard.

Much later that evening, they walked hand in hand to their Gryffindor tower, after a tender but simple good night kiss they each made their way to their respective bed, where they both relived a wonderful evening before drifting off into a peaceful slumber.

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Albus Dumbledore was removing his lurid colored robes while getting ready for bed after an uneventful Yule Ball. Yes, he did have a note from Madam Maxine complaining that her Champion had been turned into a Canary. Fortunately Olympe had found her nude student before anything happened with all the lustful young men surrounding her. He also had another note from Karkaroff saying his Champion had disappeared. Seems Krum had told his fellow classmates he was going in search of something called a Crumpled-Horned Snorkack, "Whatever that is?" Dumbledore thought. "All in all a very successful night, the Greater Good was still safe and always shall be as long as I am awake and in charge of the situation." He thought as he climbed in bed. "Tomorrow is my weekly tea with Alastor. Always good to catch up on old times. Alastor sure

is forgetting a lot of things that's happened to him, but unfortunately he doesn't have my mind."

Sorry for this chapter. It really is a mess and it got too long. Anyone have a preference to Rita Skeeter? Do I let the spider eat her?

The spider looked over at the large lump of the wrapped Dung Beetle in disgust. The smell emanating from the thing was enough to turn his stomach. He had already wrapped it in three additional layers and still the smell continued. "Maybe it needs more time." The spider thought, but realized time was running out. The snow the previous day had indicated it was time for him to hibernate or die. "I'll give it a few more hours. If it still stinks I'll abandon it. Can't have that smell ruining my hibernation."

Rita Skeeter awoke to an extremely bad taste in her beetle mouth. The first thing she noticed was that she was moving slightly as if swaying in a breeze. The next was that she couldn't move. As her beetle eyed vision came in its multifaceted focus she realized most of the facets were covered in some kind of milky white thread substance, but the few facets that were able to see could clearly make out an enormous eight legged creature. "Oh no, it's an Acromantula. I better transform back and get out of here." And as she was about to revert back to her human form she remembered an article she had read in a fashion magazine on Acromantula silk being the strongest substance known. "More sturdy than most metals" the article had said. "If I revert back and the silk doesn't break, I'll die." Rita thought and panic descended into the mind of the self declared Daily Prophet's best reporter and she blacked out.

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Harry awoke the next morning after the Yule Ball in a very good mood. The melodies of the previous evening came instantly to his mind along with the beauty of his Mione. He could still feel her in his arms as the music played, the look of enjoyment she had in her eyes. He remembered the Garden in its splendor with all the flowers blooming.

"Flowers! That's it." He thought. "I'll get Hermione some flowers to tell her how much I loved last night." Harry quickly scrambled out of bed and quickly dressed, right before he left his room he had a thought. "I wonder if we are allowed to pick the flowers. I guess I should just make sure no one sees me." He quickly grabbed the Marauder's map and made his way to the Garden. He was happy to find the warming charm was still in place. He quickly glanced at the map and finding no one else in the garden started picking two dozen roses. Once he had finished he started thinking of how to get them to Hermione and a thought came to him.

"Dobby?" Harry said quietly and a second later the little elf was beside him.

"What can Dobby do for Harry Potter sir?" The house-elf asked.

"Dobby, is there something these can be put in?"

"Yes sir Harry Potter sir. I can put them in a nice vase."

"Can you do that please Dobby, and would it be possible for you to put them next to Hermione's bed so she she's them when she wakes up?"

"Oh yes sir, Dobby can do that. Can I cut them and make them all fancy sir?" Dobby asked.

"I want them perfect for her Dobby. Anything you can do would be appreciated and I'll pay you a galleon, but she wouldn't want you to do too much."

"Yes Sir. Dobby will make them perfect." Dobby said and took the roses from Harry and disappeared.

Harry looked at the Map one more time to make sure there was still no one there and was almost ready to wipe it when he noticed a name of a person he did not expect to see. Rita Skeeter was motionless lying next to one of the towers nearby. "I wonder what she's doing here this early in the morning. Maybe I'll sneak over and see." Harry thought.

The air got distinctly colder when Harry moved out of the magically warmed gardens. As he got closer to where Rita was located Harry started moving slower to better cover his approach. He knew Rita was right around the corner but he couldn't hear anything. He looked again at the map and the dot that said Rita Skeeter still had not moved. "Maybe she got drunk and passed out." He thought.

Harry poked his head around the corner and saw....nothing. Perplexed, he looked again at the map. It said Rita Skeeter was right there. He looked again and saw nothing but a spider web glistening in the chilled air. A very plump spider sat in the middle of the web seemingly looking at an overly large lump of silk in the web.

Harry looked around the grounds and found no footprints to indicate anyone was or had been there. He looked up and didn't see anything. "Could she be buried in the snow?" He asked himself. He made his way closer to the spider web and started nudging the snow with his shoes. Finally after insuring himself she was not there and after a chill set in he gave up the search and figured the map must be in error. As he turned to leave his leg brushed up against the web and a portion of it attached itself to his pants leg, along with an overly large silk wrapped beetle. Harry wiped the map and made his way back to the Gryffindor Common room to await the love of his life to awaken and share his day with him.

Ron awoke in an extremely bad mood. Remembering the previous evening he was outraged that his so called best friend had sabotaged Ron's night as he did. Obviously he had got some kind of glamour charm done on Hermione, "Hermione, look like that? Get real." The red headed Champion thought. "Then Harry scaring away Victor Krum like that. Just when he was going to agree to let me help him clean his wand. Heck he might have even shown me how he cleans his broomstick. I wonder if Krum carries his own Balls with him? I should ask him. If he does maybe he'll show them to me." Ron thought before continuing his mental tirade against Harry for sometime before "And I never did get my dessert." He thought and then got up to go to breakfast.

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Victor Krum awoke aboard his ship. He had only got an hour or so of sleep since he had spent the night searching for the Snorkack in the forbidden forest. They didn't have any luck but it had been fun. He looked in the mirror and saw the red marks up and down his neck. He remembered he had accidentally stepped under a Mistletoe when they had returned from their endeavor and Luna had insisted the only way to insure the safe removal of Nargles was via oral suction to the neck. She had spent over an hour insuring all of the Nargles were safely removed. Krum looked again in the mirror. "I'm glad I was with an expert in Nargles. No telling what might have happened otherwise."

%%%%%%%%%

When Hermione awoke the next morning, the scent of fresh cut roses were lapping at her sense of smell. It brought back memories

of the previous night. The Great Hall, the music, dancing in Harry's arms, the stroll in the garden. Outside of the issue with the Beauxbaton Champion it had been perfect. Even that occurrence just proved to Hermione how much her boyfriend loved her. She stretched and as she opened her eyes, she saw the roses. On the table beside her bed was a vase where at least two dozen red roses were sitting amongst some baby breaths. Each rose was opened to perfection. Hermione smiled as she gazed upon the flowers. "I have the perfect boyfriend." She thought.

When she descended the steps a short time later carrying one of the roses in her hand she found that perfect boyfriend waiting in a chair for her. She sat down on his lap and proceeded to show her boyfriend how perfect she thought he was.

"I loved the flowers Harry." She said when they came up for air a few minutes later, "and I loved last night. It was perfect."

He found the almond colored eyes gazing into his own to be quite perfect in themselves. "I'm glad you liked the flowers. I hope you don't mind that I had Dobby deliver them." He shrunk a little as he expected her to possibly explode about the use of a House-elf for the task.

"You promised to pay him didn't you?" Hermione asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Yes, I told him I'd give him a galleon to arrange the roses I picked and deliver them." Harry replied.

"You picked the roses?"

"Yes love." Harry replied as his arms wrapped tighter around the woman in his lap. "I remembered the roses in the Garden last night. I figured that once they remove the warming charm they'll die so you deserved the beauty of them."

"Have I mentioned how much I love you this morning Harry?" Hermione asked, and again proceeded to demonstrate the love that she felt in a lip to lip demonstration.

When they were again forced to surface due to lack of air intake, Harry remembered what he had seen that morning. "Something

strange was going on with the Marauder's map this morning." Harry said. "I saw Rita Skeeter's name outside the castle, but when I went to look, she wasn't there." He pulled out the map to show Hermione and once he activated it, he looked where he saw Rita earlier. "Oh, she's gone now. When I went to where the map said she was earlier, she wasn't there."

"Maybe she was under a invisibility cloak or disillusioned."

"I don't think so, there were no footprints, and I thought she might have been under the snow, so I prodded around the area to make sure."

"I don't know then. Buried under the ground?"

"Uh...I hope not, but if she was, could she be dead now?"

"I use to hate her, but she's been pretty good to you this year. The comments about you kissing skills were not needed, though I will admit they were spot on, because you Mr. Potter are an excellent kisser."

"Well you're not so bad yourself Miss Granger." Harry replied. He looked again at the map to look for Hermione Granger sitting on top of Harry Potter and noticed a third name seemingly sitting on him as well. Harry leapt to his feet barely keeping Hermione from falling to the ground.

"What is it?" Hermione asked perplexed as Harry was walking all around the room while looking at the map.

"It's Rita, she's following me or something." Harry said and showed Hermione the map. She held onto it and as Harry wandered around the common room, Rita stayed right with him the whole time.

"Wait Harry, stand still." Hermione said and started examining Harry closely. When she got to his pants leg she noticed the silk wrapped bug that was attached to the remnant of a spider web. "Was there a spider web where the map said Rita was this morning?"

"Yeah, how did you know that?" Harry asked.

"I think I might have found Rita."

Harry looked down suddenly. "What do you mean?"

"I think I found out how she gets all of her news as well." Hermione said as she carefully detached the silk bundle. She took it over to a table and laid it carefully down. Thinking quickly, she ran up to her dorm and grabbed the small knife from her potions kit and returned to the common room. Very carefully she cut away the silk leaving a fat beetle. Looking closely, she noticed marking around the antennae that matched the awful glasses she wore. "See those markings. Do they remind you of Rita Skeeter's glasses?"

"They do, don't they." Harry replied.

"I think Rita is an unregistered Animagus." Hermione said. "Here." She handed the beetle to Harry. "Walk over there and I'll see if it moves on the map."

Harry walked across the room, and Hermione saw the dot marked Rita Skeeter go with him. "Now, set it down and come back. I want to make sure it's not something else on you." Harry did as his girlfriend asked and Hermione saw the dot stay in the place Harry had left the Beetle. "It's her alright."

"So what do we do now? Would the spider have poisoned her?" Harry asked.

"Possibly, maybe we should take her to Professor McGonagall so she can be sent to St. Mungos."

But just as she was saying that the beetle started moving. It reached out a leg and then another. "We know that it's you Rita." Hermione said, and a few seconds later the reporter from the Daily Prophet was standing in front of them. Unnoticed by the reporter a small pad fell to the ground beside her.

"How did I get away?"

"Harry saved you, Rita. It seems you were caught by a spider."

Rita spun to look at Harry. "How many of those monsters did you have to fight? Are you injured? How can I ever thank you?"

"Fight what?" Harry asked looking perplexed.

"The Acromantulas of course."

"It was just a spider, nothing of any importance." Harry started, but Hermione had picked up the pad Rita had dropped and since it was a book of sorts, couldn't help but open it. She realized it was the notes Rita had been taking. Coming across one of them she exclaimed. "You are not writing anything bad about Hagrid."

"But dear he is a half giant. Parents need to know the dangers their children face at this school." Rita explained like she was talking to a four year old.

"Hagrid dangerous?" Harry asked incredulously.

Hermione had been scanning the notes Rita had taken concerning Hagrid. "A bite from a flobberworm? You've got to be kidding, they don't even have teeth. Oh of course, it was Draco Malfoy who told you that."

"Hagrid was my first friend in the magical world Miss Skeeter." Harry said. "Look I would appreciate it if you wouldn't write that article."

"Besides," Hermione said, "you might not want any stories where you quote Draco after the incident last night." Hermione remembered the story that was blazing around the great hall at the beginning of the Ball.

"What about Mr. Malfoy? He comes from a very influential family."

"Well according to rumors..." Hermione told the reporter about the story of Draco and Professor Snape. "I think it was said a couple of his friends, Vincent Crabbe and Gregory Goyle were the ones who witnessed it."

Rita Skeeter was already polishing her award for the story of the son of one of the most prominent families having a sexual relationship with a Professor at Hogwarts in a corridor no less. She turned to Hermione, "Didn't Mr. Malfoy just become betrothed to a Miss Bullstrode?"

"I do believe so." Hermione responded. "Maybe you should go investigate it."

"I'll do that, and" Rita looked at Harry "Can I write the article on Hagrid in a friendlier tone talking about his friendship with you?"

"That would be fine." Harry replied. "I look forward to reading it."

"Excellent," Rita replied also planning a story on Harry's daring rescue of a certain reporter from that Acromantula. She knew he would never admit to it, so she would just write it as she felt it occurred. "Just a spider? That boy is just too modest."

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Luna Lovegood woke the next morning after the Yule Ball with a smile on her face. Though she didn't find the Snorkack again, she never realized just how much fun it was to remove Nargles. No wonder her father was smiling so much when Luna found him curing her Mum's Nargle infestation when she was seven. "I just hope I don't get bit by a Snorkack when I find one. The antivenom injections appear to be painful." The blonde Ravenclaw thought. "At least it seemed that way by the way Mum was crying out when father was administering her cure. At least she understood the importance of the injections as she kept telling him not to stop." She turned her thoughts back to Nargles. "I wonder if I can get Victor under another Mistletoe today?" She asked herself. (A/N yes I know he's seventeen and she's thirteen, but I couldn't resist.)

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Two days later Harry and Hermione were sitting in the Great Hall enjoying breakfast as they fed each other eggs Benedict when the Daily Prophet was delivered. There were two sets of two side by side pictures. The first set had Draco Malfoy and Professor Snape and the other had Ron Weasley and Professor Trelawney and the headline read

SEX SCANDAL ROCKS HOGWARTS

By

Rita Skeeter

It has come to this reporter's attention that there are not one but two ongoing relationships between student and teachers at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Recently on the night of the Yule Ball it was discovered by this reporter that Draco Malfoy, the only child of prominent Wizard Lucius Malfoy was engaged in a sexual act in a public corridor with no other than his Potions Professor and Head of Slytherin House Severus Snape. The two lovers were discovered by two friends of young Malfoy Gregory Goyle and Vincent Crabbe. "It was awful," Goyle told me. "Snape was under Malfoy calling for Draco to perform sex on him. Vincent and I left the corridor immediately."

The other incident occurred at the Yule Ball itself. I witnessed the Professor of Divinations Sibyll Trelawney on the arm of the fourth Triwizard Champion Ronald Billius Weasley. The two seemed to be happy until the young professor became nauseous and had to admit herself to the hospital wing. Sources indicate that she was suffering from morning sickness.

I call upon the Headmaster of the school Albus Dumbledore to investigate these occurrences with the upmost vigor and bring a standard of integrity back to the school over which he administers.

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Madam Pomfrey was sitting at the head table and had just finished reading the article. She slammed down her cup of Pumpkin juice while muttering under her breath, "I said she would be fine in the morning, not she had morning sickness."

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Draco Malfoy was sitting next to his Betrothed who was reading the Daily Prophet. When she finished the article she turned to her fiancé.

"How could you Draco?" Millicent asked. "How could you betray me like this?"

"What..what do you mean?" Draco asked, confused since Millicent never let him read the Prophet anymore.

"You and Professor Snape before the Yule Ball. You were suppose to be going to the Hospital wing and now I find out you're sleeping with our Head of House."

"WHAT?" Draco exclaimed.

"I didn't know you were bisexual Draco." Millicent said. "Though I guess I should have known from all the hair care products you use to wear."

"I'm not Bisexual." Draco exclaimed.

"You're GAY!" Millicent yelled at him. "How can you be marrying me when you're GAY!"

"I'm..." Draco stopped and looked at his plate as he thought. "Could this be a way out of the marriage? I just tell her I'm gay and she breaks up with me. No one else is around us to hear it. I'll just deny everything later."

Millicent was ticked. Her betrothed had betrayed her, all of her dreams were crashing down around her, and then she remembered the contract and the Slytherin in her came out to play. She brought her wand up and pointing it at Draco while he wasn't looking and she whispered, "Sonus."

Draco looked back at her and his magically enhanced whisper filled the Great Hall, "I ADMIT IT, I'M GAY. I'VE BEEN SLEEPING WITH PROFESSOR SNAPE."

Millicent got up from her seat and stormed out of the Great Hall while the laughter started ringing around the room as Draco realized what had just happened slumped in his seat and dropping his head onto the table where it came to rest in a the heavy maple syrup he had recently put on his waffles.

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At the head table a greasy head of hair attached to the head of Professor Snape was rotating to look in the direction of Gryffindor Table. "POTTER! I know it was you. Detention EVERY night until you leave this school after your seventh year and eight hundred points from Gryffindor."

Professor McGonagall had a look of disgust as she was forced to look over at her colleague.. er...coworker...er...at the idiot who teaches Potions. "Severus, it was your own students who gave witness, not Mr. Potter. Don't be blaming someone from my house for your indiscretions." She turned to the Slytherin table, "Mr. Goyle, Mr. Crabbe, fifty points each for telling the truth and bring the matter to the proper attention." She then looked over at Harry, "Of course you will not serve those detentions Mr. Potter, nor will the points be removed." Finally turning to the Headmaster "I presume you will be investigating these actions?"

Albus Dumbledore, leader of the light and Headmaster of the school had been deep in thought wondering if he should braid his beard today. After all he did have his tea later today with Alastor. He had nearly decided on trying a French braid this time when he was rudely interrupted by his Deputy Headmistress. "Investigate what Minerva?"

"Severus's sexual activity with young Draco." Didn't you hear Mr. Malfoy yell out earlier confirming it?"

"I'm sorry but I was busy contemplating very serious issues." Professor Dumbledore said, and then turned his twinkling eyes on his Potions Master. "Severus, you shouldn't do things like that. Don't let it happen again. Or at least don't get caught again." Sitting back in his chair the aged Wizard felt proud for dealing with the situation so firmly. "After all I need Severus for the Greater Good." His thoughts turned back to his beard. "Maybe a Dutch braid?"

McGonagall just shook her head in disbelief. Turning back to the Headmaster one more time she asked "And what about Sibyl?" She might be carrying Ron Weasley's child."

Madam Pomfrey spoke up at this time, "Sybil is not carrying Mr. Weasley's child I can assure you of that."

"Are you sure, Poppy? This is a serious issue." McGonagall asked.

"I'm quite sure Minerva. I examined Sibyl just last evening and it wasn't morning sickness."

The noise in the Great Hall had continued to rise as people were once again discussing Draco Malfoy being gay causing the conversation between Minerva and Poppy to continue to increase in volume.

"So she was in the hospital wing? What was she suffering from?" Minerva asked.

Ron Weasley was at that moment reading the article. He had started several minutes prior but he still had trouble reading those things where multiple sentences strung together called paragraphs and it took him longer to finish. When he finally finished, he exclaimed "That two timing Bitch, I give her the best evening of her life and she's carrying someone else's child?" as he finished that rant, he looked over at Harry and Hermione who had went back to feeding each other and laughing at themselves,

"PPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTT
PPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTT"

The whole Hall went silent as everyone turned to look at Ron, that is everyone but Poppy who was replying overly loud to Minerva. "SHE WAS SUFFERING FROM NAUSEA CAUSED BY SEEING RON WEASLEY'S ARSE."

The Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws were having a hard time swiveling their necks and laughing at Draco on one side of the Great Hall and Ron Weasley on the other side. Many of them ended up in the Hospital wing with sore necks.

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Lucius Malfoy finished reading the Daily Prophet and he sat back and tried to remember who would inherit their fortune if Draco didn't have a heir. "Gay? My son is Gay?" He looked over at his stash of firewhiskey. "Six bottles, I'm going to need more after today."

He thought of going up and asking Narcissa if it would be possible to have another child but her words from their wedding night came back to him. "IF YOU EVER TOUCH ME AGAIN I WILL PERSONALLY CAST SEVERING CHARMS ON ANY PART OF YOU EVEN REMOTELY CONNECTED TO REPRODUCTION AND SHOVE WHAT COMES OFF WHERE THE SUN DOES NOT

SHINE." Lucius used to consider himself lucky that they did conceive that night, but with the latest revelations concerning his son, he started reconsidering. No, he definitely would not ask Narcissa, he knew she even kept an extremely sharp knife in the bedside drawer just in case she couldn't find her wand.

A/N:I was going to delete the rest of this since so many people objected to my bashing Arthur and Molly, but an excellent suggestion by my reader Luan Mao to make it an Omake instead. So the rest of this Chapter is not really happening, just humor for you to read. If you like Molly and Arthur and really hate for them to be bashed, PLEASE do not read further.

%%%%%%%%%

Arthur Weasley finished reading the article in the Daily Prophet. "My son got a teacher pregnant?" He asked himself. Thinking of his youngest son and how different he was compared to his other children. Bill, Charlie, the twins, even Percy and Ginny all showed remarkable intelligence, but Ron just didn't seem to match the same caliber as all other children. "Could it be?" A question came to his mind, though he kept dismissing it, the thought kept nagging at his mind the rest of the day. Before he left for the evening, he opened a closet of items that he had confiscated but kept since they might be useful at a later time and removed a bottle of Veritaserum and put it in his pocket.

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Later that evening at the Burrow, Arthur and Molly were sitting down to their usual Dinner together. The house was extremely quiet now that all the children were either at Hogwarts or had moved away.

When Molly was in the kitchen retrieving the last of the food, Arthur pulled the little bottle from his pocket and poured three drops into Molly's tea. When she returned, he casually chatted with her during dinner until the tea was consumed. He waited for her gaze to go unfocused and he started the questioning.

"Molly Wobbles dear, is Ron my son?" Arthur asked.

Molly turned her unfocused eyes toward her husband. "Of course dear."

Mr. Weasley was taken aback. He was so sure there was something different about his youngest son compared to the rest of his children. "But he doesn't seem to be like any of our other children." He said.

"Of course not dear, why would he when they don't share the same father." Molly answered.

"But..but you said he was my son."

"Yes dear."

"Are you saying that none of my..of the other children are mine?" Arthur asked ashen faced.

"Yes dear." I am very fortunate that my red hair is a very dominant feature.

"Who...Whose are they? I mean we had Bill because of our wedding night."

"Bill was Amos Diggory's." Molly answered looking at her husband with those unfocused eyes.

"But Amos...he was what fourteen when Bill was born."

"Yes dear, and his parents wouldn't let a thirteen year old marry me when he got me pregnant. That's why I had to give you the love potion and get you to elope with me. Remember he was born two months premature, well that's what I told you."

Arthur was stunned. This wasn't what he thought he was going to hear. "And Charlie?"

"You remember the Easter celebration we had that year. Well Hagrid and I...well we had a little fun. I was glad to find out the Giant blood doesn't pass down through a second generation. Why do you think he loves dragons so much."

Arthur went to the shelf and grabbed the bottle of fire whiskey and a glass. As he started to pour himself a drink, he put the glass back and drank straight from the bottle. "Molly and Hagrid?" Arthur's life was crumbling before his eyes.

"And Percy?" Arthur asked after another swig of the fiery liquid and a burp of a nice long length of flames.

"I'm not exactly sure. I think it happened at the office party when I took that job at the Ministry when you were unemployed. I recall both Barty Crouch and Cornelius Fudge were both giving me drinks that evening."

Another swig, then a gulp of the fire whiskey, the numbness that flowed into his body was helping. "And the twins?"

Molly Weasley got a smile on her lips as her unfocused eyes seemed to lose even more focus, "Oh I remember that night, Sirius took me up for a ride on his motorcycle. Did you know you that bike can hover? What that man could do with his hands, I can still remember that feeling."

"Sirius Black?"

"Yes dear." Molly said.

"And Ginny? Is she mine?"

"No dear."

"Who..who's her father?"

"You remember the Halloween party the Potters had after Harry was born?" Molly asked.

"Not James? Please don't tell me it wasn't James?"

"Of course not dear. But there is a reason she looks so much like Lily." Molly said. "Lily's father was such a nice Muggle. He complimented me on my cooking and well one thing led to another. It was tragic when he and his wife died shortly after that night."

"So Ginny's actually Harry's Aunt?"

"I guess." Molly replied trying figure out the relationship there.

"You've been trying to set Harry up with his Aunt?" Arthur said.

"It would be like having James and Lily back again. Like they never died. Wouldn't that be wonderful?" Molly asked.

By the time the Veritaserum wore off Molly, Arthur was gone. He was discovered many years later where he was rising fast in the Muggle political arena. Not having a clue about everyday items such as electricity or understanding the value of money seemed to be an asset in that career. The people kept electing him to higher and higher offices.

I'll leave it here for now. Next Chapter will have the other Rita stories and maybe Ron starting on deciphering the egg's clue.

I am getting a lot of reviews saying I missed saying who Ron's father was. I need to point out that I didn't. Molly answered it in the first question when she answered Yes to Arthur's question if Ron's his son.

Chapter 10

In the Great Hall the next morning Harry and Hermione were enjoying a nice breakfast. They had learned to tune out the sight and sound of Ron eating. If it wasn't for the nausea it created, watching him try to hold onto his egg with one hand and shovel food with the other might have been amusing. As usual the Owls started their morning deliveries before the meal was over. Hermione quickly unrolled the Daily Prophet and saw a picture of Fleur Delacour that had been taken at the weighing of the wands headlining the front page article.

Veela Terrorizes Hogwarts

By

Rita Skeeter

This reporter witnessed the most shocking and brazen event on the night of the Yule Ball at the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Following a romantic evening of dancing by the Boy-Who-Lived Harry Potter and his love interest Miss Hermione Granger (see accompany articles on the spectacular dancing skill portrayed by the couple and an updated analysis on Mr. Potter's kissing skills.) the two lovebirds were enjoying a quiet time the gardens when the Beauxbaton Academy of Magic TriWizard Champion and part Veela, Fluer Delacour attempted to ensnare our young hero by use of her Veela powers. Only the true love Mr. Potter feels for his love interest and Miss Granger's formidable defense of her wizard prevented the theft and corruption of our national hero's affections and innocence.

I call upon the Headmaster of Hogwarts and the Beauxbaton Headmistress to launch a joint investigation into this event. I also call upon my readers to show your displeasure with the Beauxbaton Champion herself. And I finally call upon my readers to let Miss Granger know of your appreciation for the love she has for our young Hero and her willingness to defend him at all cost.

When Hermione had finished reading the article she was lost in thought as she remembered that evening in the Garden. "I'll always be there for Harry." She thought. Finally breaking out of her thoughts she noticed there were several Beauxbaton students standing near her.

"Excuse me Mademoiselle Granger?" Asked one of the students in the light blue cloaks.

"Yes." Hermione answered warily as she and Harry put their hands on their wands.

"We," the student indicated the ensemble of Beauxbatons standing next to her, "wish to apologize on behalf of our school. Zough we wish it understood, zat zis is only on behalf of the school and not Mademoiselle Delacour 'erself. We find what she did disgusting and inexcusable."

"Thank you." Hermione said relaxing. "I hold no grudge against your Academy. My family and I have traveled many times to your wonderful country and plan to continue doing so."

"Zank you. My name is Michelle." The leader of the group said. "We also would like to ask a favor if we may?"

"Which would be?"

"Could you teach us ze spell you used on Madamoielle Delacour? She 'as stolen several of our boyfriends and we would like to be able to defend our love interest as well as you did."

"Eet ees very funny." Another of the Beauxbaton students chimed in. "For ze first time zat truie (French for pig) is 'aving to wear make-up. She won't leave ze carriage."

"I'll be glad to," Hermione replied. "But I would prefer to wait until you are preparing to leave. I can't guarantee that one of you isn't really friends with her, and knowing the actual spell might make it possible for a cure to be found before it wears off, or if I need to do it again if she tries anything else."

"We understand," Michelle replied. "Zough we can guarantee zat no female in ze whole school likes 'er. She struts around ze school as if she is a queen, and if you get 'er mad she transform into 'ag-bird. Last year Marianna," Michelle nodded to another of the students, "got 'it with 'er fire and was in ze 'ospital was two weeks."

"Well if she causes too much of a problem before you leave, come see me again." Hermione replied.

"Zank you."

%%%%%%%%%

Dumbledore was in a bad mood. Alastor had stood him up the previous day. After he had spent two hours braiding his beard just for the event, his old friend had stood him up. He looked down at this braided beard. He had even washed the beard before braiding it, and he had been STOOD UP. He glared at the knarled Defense instructor. As he simmered in his anger, the annoying voice of that cat woman..uh..McGonagall cut though his thoughts.

"Well Albus, are you going to investigate the Beauxbaton Champion's attack on Mr. Potter?"

"Investigate what Minerva?"

"The report that the Beauxbaton Champion attacked Mr. Potter and Miss Granger?" Professor McGonagall pushed the morning Daily Prophet under his nose. Dumbledore took his eyes off of Moody enough to look down at the headlines of the prophet. He quickly scanned the newspaper before his eyes caught an ad for magical grease removing shampoo. "Hmm...wonder if Severus would like that for a birthday present?" He considered the pros and cons of the gift as any over intelligent leader of the light should before arriving at his definitive conclusion."Probably not." The Headmaster sat back in his great chair in the Great Hall to contemplate what his friend would like for his birthday. "I wonder if he likes socks?"

"Well Albus?" Professor McGonagall asked.

"Well what?" Professor Dumbledore asked serenely.

"Will you be investigating?"

"What do I need to investiga..." Dumbledore started before remembering it had something to do with the newspaper in front of him. He looked back down at the article and saw the picture of the young Veela, "Well if I was one hundred and twenty years younger and didn't bat for the other team she would be attractive." He

thought to himself as he read the story while trying to keep his eyes off the ad for the shampoo. He knew it would just make him start wondering what Snape would look like without greasy hair.

"Of course Minerva. A full investigation will be conducted at the earliest possible time." Dumbledore replied. "Don't let her ask, don't let her ask." He quietly pleaded.

"And when would that be Albus?" Asked the strict Transfiguration teacher.

"Crap, she asked." Dumbledore thought then turned the twinkling eyes on his deputy Headmistress. "As soon as I can fit it into my busy schedule Minerva."

"I presume then that it will be the day after the Beauxbatons leave?" McGonagall replied.

"Well the school year is quite full."

"If this man had to actually teach a child something important, what should take a couple of hours would probably take a year." McGonagall thought as she rolled her eyes. (A/N: Yes that is a jibe at the sixth book and those memories.)

%%%%%%%%%

Moody AKA Crouch Jr. was suffering from a severe hangover. Even two different headache potions hadn't cured his pounding head. He had missed his weekly tea with the Headmaster because he had had a run in with the Weasley Champion and afterwards he had consumed his entire stock of Fire Whiskey. He had even sent a house elf to get a bottle of an alcohol he had heard muggles praising before, something called Tequila. Just the thought of that type of alcohol brought a splitting pain to his head. As he suffered in the bright flames of the Great Hall the scene from the previous day came to mind.

Flashback

Moody was walking down the hall when he encountered the young Weasley storming down the hall muttering something about 'Two timing tramp'. "Weasley." He growled.

Ron stopped immediately. Though irritated that a lowly professor would dare stop a Triwizard Champion he did remember Moody performing the cruciatus curse on that spider. As much as Ron would love to see every single spider in the world suffer the same fate, he himself would prefer to not to experience it. "Yes sir?"

"I see you have your egg."

"I carry it everywhere I go sir."

"Excellent, so figured out the clue yet?"

"Clue?"

"The Clue in the egg."

"The egg is a clue?" Ron asked.

"Of course."

Ron looked down at his golden egg. "You mean I have a clue? I can't wait to tell Fred and George, it was just yesterday they were telling me I was clueless." At that the red head went running off to find his brothers to tell them the news, leaving Crouch/Moody contemplating performing the Cruciatus curse on himself. "It just might be less painful than this headache." He thought. It was after the walk to his office that he started the drinking, forgetting all about his date..er..tea with the Headmaster.

End flashback.

%%%%%%%%%

Lucius Malfoy sighed as he read the latest scandal from Hogwarts. He of course, remembered the Veela from the first task and how easily she had killed a dragon. And this Veela was taken down by the witch his son keeps calling a mudblood? "I guess I'm fortunate to still have a son." He thought to himself, and then reconsidering, "Hmm, I wonder if Narcissa would change her mind if Draco were to die?" Lucius reluctantly dismissed the idea. He knew if his planning his own son's murder somehow were to get back to his wife, he

doubted any part of his body would exist where the sun didn't shine with as many holes she would inflict upon him.

He looked over that the missive that had arrived a few minutes earlier from the Bullstrodes. Of course they were nullifying the agreement and as the letter pointed out, section three, subsection d, clearly stated any information withheld that would be detrimental to the well being of the marriage was reason to forfeit the amount paid to secure the betrothal agreement and clearly the sexual orientation of the groom fell clearly into that category. "Twenty-five thousand galleons gone. " Lucius thought as he refilled his glass again. Looking down at the liquid in the glass, he thought, "I need a bigger glass." He sat back in his chair and considered his options, it was an hour and two more glasses later before an idea came to mind. He remembered Fudge commenting on his assistant was looking for a husband, and if he remembered correctly, she did have a slight male look about her, well more like a toad, but a male toad. Maybe she would be willing to enter into marriage with his son. "What was her name?" Lucius thought, "Something that reminded me of a troll and where they live. Underbridge? No...Umbridge that was it. I'll send Fudge an Owl later and see if she might be willing." Lucius fell into an alcohol induced slumber where nightmares of blond haired ferrets mating with toads kept appearing.

%%%%%%%%%

The next morning there were Owls at Hogwarts, a lot of Owls. The entire Beauxbaton Carriage was plastered in Owls. Hundred, or even thousands of Owls. Every time the door was opened several of them flew in and attempted to deliver the letters to the cowering Fleur Delacour. Howlers were exploding at an almost constant rate of several per minute. The readers of Rita Skeeter proved to be up to the challenge of letting the Beauxbaton Champion know of their displeasure over her attempt on Harry Potter.

As another set of Owls descended into the Great Hall and some of them headed straight for the Gryffindor table, while others flew over to the Slytherin table and even other went for the Head table. Ron sighed happily as he knew that the Owls headed their way carried the fan mail he expected. He suspected the witches of England had finally realized he was so handsome even teachers couldn't keep their hands off of him and they wanted a share of him as well. "Though some of them might be applications for my fan club." He

thought, "I better get with the Creevy Brothers and make sure they have enough photos." And half the owls that had flown toward the Gryffindor table did descend in front of him, on top of him, even a few hovering over him obeying their master's instructions to deliver far more than letters, while the others flew further down the table to land around Hermione.

Dear Ronald Weasley,

Having read the article yesterday in the Daily Prophet, I find it highly embarrassing to even live in the same country as you.

Evelyn Ridgewater

"Must have me mixed up with Malfoy." Thought Ron as he opened the next one.

Mr. Weasel,

You disgust me. Please expect a curse in my next letter.

"Another weirdo." Thought Ron as he laid it aside and opened the next and the next and the next, all with similar messages.

"My admirers are probably taking their time in writing their letters. Wow if I got this many from the weirdos think how many I'll get from my fans." Ron thought as we went back to eating not noticing the extra morsels that had been deposited on his plate by Owls not able to get over his head. As he was eating he noticed Hermione opening letters as well. Bits and pieces of the letters filtered down the table as she read them to Harry.

"...I wish you two the best in all..."

"...So glad you two..."

"...love is such a wonderful..."

"PPPWWWWT TTTPPPPPPWWWT TTTT PPPWWWWTTT
PPPPPPWWWT TTTT"

%%%%%%%%%

Victor Krum entered the Great Hall with Luna on his arm. He made sure she was with him as much as possible. Between Nargles and Wrackspurts, and Blibbering Humdingers Hogwarts was too dangerous to not have an expert on hand. He had another run in with Nargles the previous day and Luna had once again gone to the painstaking troubles of saving him. She had even warned him about creatures in the lake he swam in every day called Aquavirius Maggots that are suppose to infect your brain. Krum had no plans to re-enter the water anytime soon. But there was one problem this morning.

"So you got your own Nargle infection this morning?"

"Yes, unfortunately the castle poltergeist put a Mistletoe over me and I ended up with a serious infestation." Luna replied dreamily.

Ron Weasley, Triwizard Tournament Champion and living legend in his own mind saw the Quidditch star enter the Great Hall. It was the first time he had seen him since the Yule Ball. Looking at who was on his arm he recognized Loony Lovegood, the idiotic tart who lived near him. "I'll save him from her and he'll be forever grateful. Probably get me season tickets to any Quidditch team, or maybe even give me his broom."

Ron rushed over to the Durmstrang Champion, "Victor," he started nudging himself between Krum and Luna, "Hey I've been looking all over you. Want to get together sometime, I mean I would love to see your broomstick. Maybe you can show me how you polish it."

Krum looked at the Red Head and noticed he was covered in owl dropping. He swallowed hard as he tried not to throw up as he figured out which dark curse would hurt the worst.

Ron took the staring as deep interest and continued, "Hey do you by any chance carry your own balls? If you do, I'd love to see those as...erk." Ron's body convulsed and then he slumped to the floor as Luna lazily put her wand back behind her ear and took Krum's arm again.

"He seems to have a nasty infection of Wrackspurts." She said dreamily to Krum. "I'll teach you the correct spell to prevent the infection from spreading. It's a mixture between a shock and stunning spell." She led Krum on toward the Ravenclaw table.

Krum looked back at the Ron's body sprawled on the floor. "How long will he be like that?"

"Oh it is a nasty infection, at least three or four days."

"Couldn't it be longer?" Krum asked hopefully, and then remembering the plight of the girl beside him. "Now about that Nargle infestation you ended up with, do you need me to administer the proper remedy?"

"If you could Victor, I'm sorry to be so much trouble, but I need someone I can trust." Luna replied secretly remembering to herself that she owed Peeves a favor. After breakfast Krum spent several hours ensuring Luna was free of all possible Nargle infestations.

%%%%%%%%%

Draco Malfoy might have been amused by the plight of the Red Head Weasel, if he didn't have his own issues with Owls. At least two dozen owls had descended upon him as well. Several of those made similar deposits not related to letters as well. One of the Owls regurgitated the bones of a dead rodent on his plate. The letters ranged from mild insults to propositions by wizards to curses, one of the curses turned the little hair he had left pink and Madam Pomfrey told him later that reversing it might cause further damage to the delicate regrowth process. She said he would need to leave it be for at least another month.

%%%%%%%%%

(A/N: For those of you who don't want to read about OWLS being killed substitute 'stunned' for 'killed' or 'died' in the following paragraph)

Snape just sneered at the Owls headed his way, he raised his wand and with a flick the first dozen died in mid flight. The other Owls fearing for their lives turned tail and flew away.

Professor McGonagall was shocked, she turned to Professor Dumbledore "Albus, are you going to let him get away with something like that?"

Dumbledore was once again deep in thought on serious issues as he sat on his throne at the Head Table. "I think I put my socks on the wrong feet this morning. I always wear my pink one on the left foot but I think I put it on the right foot this morning. Of course that wouldn't be the right foot for the sock even if it is on the right foot, or would it?"

"Albus!" McGonagall said a little louder.

"I just can't get any problem solved around here without her breaking my concentration every few seconds." The head master thought. "Yes Minerva?"

"Are you just going to ignore Severus's actions?" She asked pointing toward the dozen dead Owls laying in front of the Potions Master.

"What am I to do Minerva. I can't help it if he smells that bad." Dumbledore replied.

"Smel...No he killed them as they were trying to deliver mail to him."

"Ah..well that's different. I'm sure he was shocked since no one ever sends him letters." Dumbledore explained. "He probably thought he was being attacked."

"You...You're just going to let him get away with it?" Professor McGonagall shrieked.

"Of course not. Calm yourself." Dumbledore replied and he turned to his pet Death Eater. "Severus, please refrain from killing anything while there are so many witnesses about."

"Yes Headmaster." Replied Snape as his lip curled in a sneer or smile. No one ever figured out how to tell the difference when it came to Snape.

"My ability to resolve conflict is unquestionably the reason I am so good at my job." The headmaster thought to himself before returning to contemplating socks and feet. "What if I wore a pink and a blue sock on each foot. Would that work?"

%%%%%%%%%

New Years Eve was another day Hermione would remember for a long time to come. Fred and George had arranged a common room celebration, but shortly before midnight, Harry convinced Hermione to go for a broom ride. Taking advantage of the new moon, the two of them took off over the Black lake with Hermione clinging tightly to Harry. She finally opened her eyes trusting her Harry would never let anything happen to her. Looking around and seeing the night sky with the stars aglitter was one of the most romantic sights she could imagine. Laying her head on Harry's back as she kept her arms tightly wrapped around his chest she realized flying wasn't so bad with the right person. When they heard the clock in the tower start to chime, Harry landed on the edge of the lake and in the darkness they shared a kiss that promised the New Year would even be better than the old.

%%%%%%%%%

Even with Madam Pomfrey's ministrations it still took Ron Weasley four days to recover consciousness. He was quite upset that he had missed out on four days worth of food and immediately set off for the Great Hall to catch up.

%%%%%%%%%

Moody caught up with Ron Weasley Triwizard Champion again shortly after he awoke from his magical slumber.

"Well Weasley, how's the clue coming?" He asked.

"Oh the egg is fine, see no scratches and I polish it every night." Ron exclaimed holding up the egg.

"No I mean solving the clue? How are you coming with that?"

"What do you mean solve the clue?"

"You have to figure out what the egg means so you know what you have to do for the next task." Moody growled patiently as he could without actually cursing the idiot.

"How do I do that?" Ron asked.

"You have to use your brai..." Moody/Crouch stopped mid sentence has he realized the flaw in his plan. "Maybe if you ask your friends." He quickly suggested.

%%%%%%%%%

It was the first day of classes at the start of the new term and Harry and Hermione along with Ron were in the Care of Magical Creature's class. Ron had finally come up with a way to get the information from Hermione in a subtle way so she would never know what he was asking. Turning to Hermione as he hoisted the egg up, "Hey Granger, what do you think of when you see this egg?"

Hermione's first thought was of the first task, but she swallowed the nausea down and looking at the Egg and Hagrid, "Jack and the beanstalk, I mean we have a giant and a golden egg, all we need is a hen to lay it." She said.

"GOT IT!" Ron thought. "I know the answer."

%%%%%%%%%

"So Weasley?" Moody asked again several days later, "Do you have the clue worked out."

"Of course." Ron replied smiling broadly. "Second task is going to be at Hagrid's hut and we have to find some kind of hen." He remarked proudly.

Moody's headaches were coming more frequently than ever. Just the sight of Ron Weasley was enough to start a migraine and actually hearing him speak made a Voldemort rage driven Cruciatus curse feel like a gentle spring breeze. Moody swallowed once as he tried and failed to speak over the pain, and finally he was able to say "No, that isn't right." He looked at the Champion and realized he was going to need serious help. "Look just take a bath with it ok. Use the prefect's bathroom, the password is pine fresh."

Ron looked confused, well more confused than normal, "Ok, sure."

A little later Ron was headed to the Prefects bathroom when he came across Cedric. "Hey Cedric, Moody suggested I take a bath with my egg, want to join me? I mean you can wash my egg and I'll

wash yours? Oh and have you seen Krum, I've been trying to find him. I was going to see if he wanted to join me. I mean if his balls are dirty, he might let me wash them."

Cedric bolted down the hallways as fast as he could never to enter any bathroom without someone else verifying Ron was not in there. Even then he locked the door with six different locking charms. Later he wondered why a professor would make such a recommendation though and it wasn't long after that incident though that Cedric discovered the secret in the egg.

"He must be going to get his egg." Ron thought as Cedric dashed away. "Well he'll just have to catch up; I'm not waiting for him."

%%%%%%%%%

"So Weasley?" The unmistakable voice of Moody called out again the next day. "Did you take that bath with your egg?"

"Of course."

"And?"

Ron held up his egg, "I got my egg really clean. See how it sparkles now."

Moody/Crouch looked at his own left arm. "I wonder if my master could find me if I cut off my arm and disappear?" but realizing there would be no escape, he tried again. "Mr. Weasley, try opening the egg next time."

"The egg opens?" Ron asked looking bewildered, well more bewildered than normal at the egg, as immediately he started thinking about how much golden scrambled eggs an egg this size could make and that of course made him hungry and he started off to the Great Hall to see if they were still serving food.

%%%%%%%%%

"So Weasley?" Moody asked again in a couple more days. "Did you open the egg in the bathroom?"

"Of course."

"And?"

"I know what I have to do now."

"Which is?"

"Kidnap my brother Percy while he's singing in the shower." Ron answered smugly. It only had taken him a few seconds to recognize that voice. "No one will ever think he can't figure these things out on his own anymore." He thought. "Of course it would have been a lot easier if that damn ghost Myrtle hadn't been laughing the whole time. Well she wasn't laughing the whole time; there was the time she ducked under the water. I didn't know a ghost could throw up."

Moody realized his mistake, well outside of not killing the idiot and substituting a polyjuiced wormtail to be a Champion, but then again it would be about the same intelligence level. "Never mind that idea." He thought. He looked the red headed Champion in the eye and said slowly, "Take the egg to the bathroom and open it UNDER the water and put your own head under the water at the same time. Is that clear?"

Ron nodded. "Does this guy think I'm stupid or something?" He asked himself.

Moody/Crouch stomped back to his office wondering if he laced his polyjuice potion with Fire Whiskey could he stay drunk the whole hour.

That night Moody followed Ron to the bathroom after he drunk the anti-nausea potion he had gotten from Madam Pomfrey. Ten minutes later he was hitting his head against the wall. He had watched the Red Head put the egg in the water in a sink and then put his own head under the water in the tub. Swallowing the bile that tried to escape even over the potion, he stomped into the bathroom, grabbed the wailing egg and heaved it into the tub. "There." He thought as he stomped out of the bathroom.

%%%%%%%%%

"So Weasley." Moody asked the Champion again the next day. "You finally got your clue?"

"Yeah of course. Told you I'd figure it out." Ron replied smugly.

"Well what's the clue say?" Moody asked leaving nothing to chance this time.

"Something about seeker and missing and black."

"You didn't get the whole clue?" Crouch asked as he contemplated taking his wooden leg off and beating the kid senseless, but realized he already was.

"Who needs it, it's obvious I have to play seeker and catch a black snitch that's missing." Ron explained.

"A Dementor's kiss really can't be that bad?" Crouch thought, and then to Ron, "You didn't write down the clue?"

"Write down? You mean like take notes?"

"Yes that is exactly what I mean." Moody exclaimed.

"Do I look like Hermione?" Ron asked.

"You're going to need the whole clue to solve the puzzle."

"A puzzle, but I thought you said it was a clue."

"It's a clue to the puzzle." Moody growled just keeping himself from killing the idiot.

"Oh, well why didn't you say so."

Moody's hangover the next day was one of the worst so far.

%%%%%%%%%

"So Weasley, Do you have the whole clue now?"

Ron rounded on the professor, "It's a joke right? I know it can't be done."

Moody contemplated the idiot closely, "What do you mean?"

"I mean you try to take notes when the egg is talking and your ink runs and the water destroys the parchment. It can't be done."

"You tried to take the notes UNDER the water?" Moody growled.

"It's where the bloody egg is talking isn't it?" Ron asked.

Fortunately the imposter was ready this time. He whipped out a parchment he was carrying and handed it to Ron. "Here. This is what the egg is saying."

Ron looked down and read

Come seek us where our voices sound,
We cannot sing above the ground,
And while you are searching, ponder this:
We've taken what you'll sorely miss,
An hour long you'll have to look,
And to recover what we took,
But past an hour- the prospect's black,
Too late, it's gone, it won't come back

Ten minutes later Moody was still watching the Triwizard champion mouth the words to the clue. "Do you have any questions now?"

"Yeah, uh what does ponder mean?"

"It means to think about...oh crap." Moody said. "Look let's look through this clue."

"But I thought this was a puzzle?"

"It's the clue to the puzzle."

"But I thought the egg was the clue, so this must be the puzzle."

"No this is the clue to the puzzle, the egg only held the clue." Moody/Crouch explained.

"Oh, so I have been clueless then." Muttered Ron.

"You have no idea." Moody muttered and then to Ron, "Let's look at the clue. Now the first two lines, what do you think they say?"

"Uh..Come seek us where our voices sound, we cannot sing above the gound?"

Moody wait patiently for Ron to continue, then he realized his mistake again, "No I mean what does it mean?"

"How am I suppose to know?" Ron asked.

Moody shook his head, "Look, it's simple, the task is going to be held where you can hear the voices inside the egg."

A look of understanding crossed Ron's face. "That is simple isn't it?" He said. "The second task going to be held in the prefect's bathroom."

Moody's gnarled mouth opened once and closed, again he tried and failed. Finally he just turned and stomped off.

%%%%%%%%%

Albus Dumbledore was having a very difficult month as well. Not only was Moody continually standing him up but he couldn't find a suitable hostage for Mr. Weasley. Correction, he couldn't find any hostage for Mr. Weasley. Sybil had made it perfectly clear that Albus would have an overly large crystal ball shoved somewhere very uncomfortable if he even thought about her. He had approached Mr. Potter whose laughter was borderline maniacal, whereas Miss Granger's remarks would have been considered rude in Knockturn alley, much less this fine educational establishment with the finest teachers that can be found. Even the house-elves who cooked his dinner requested clothes over being disgraced so. Molly had suggested the boy's chocolate frog card collection and while normally that would have been an excellent solution, with the hostages needing to be underwater for several hours, it was unlikely the cards would survive the treatment.

Albus found himself wandering the corridors one late January day when the solution came to him. He was walking past the older twin brothers of the Champion who seemed to be making plans.

"But he never goes anywhere without the egg."

"I know. He even takes it to the loo with him."

"Well we need to get our hands on it."

And miraculously the solution came to Dumbledore, his egg. His egg can be the hostage. "That's a relief." The Headmaster thought, "Now I can get back to the more important stuff like why doesn't Moody like me anymore."

%%%%%%%%%

Harry and Hermione were having a wonderful month. They started spending a lot more time in the library where they knew Ron would never both them. With Hermione's reward system for studying Harry quickly was becoming much fonder of schoolwork. The snogging she had given him for the O on a transfiguration paper was something to strive for each and every time. The Hogsmeade trip later in the month also proved to be another wonderful time.

Rita's article on Hagrid had come out praising him for his befriending and caring for the young boy-who-lived and Hagrid had responded by bringing out Unicorns for the girls to pet and even Unicorn foals for the boys to be able to touch.

A/N: One of the reviews of this chapter (anon of course so I couldn't reply) didn't think the egg could be a hostage. I would like to point out that the clue says we've taken WHAT you'll sorely miss, not WHO.

A/N: I REALLY wanted to put a section of Luna hearing the sounds of the anti-venom injections of the Crumpled Horn Snorkack being administered and enters the broom closet to ask where the couple found it, but thought it might be inappropriate. So just imagine such a section and laugh really hard. Especially as she sits dreamily by saying I'll wait until you're finished when they tell her it will be a while. Maybe one of my readers wants to write a lemony one shot concerning the birth of the Crumpled Horned Snorkack. It starts when Xeno and his wife are enjoying post coital bliss on their wedding night and she says something like "oh it's so cute, like a little crumpled horn, and it's sleeping now. Let's see if I can awaken your little crumpled horn snoring male private parts". Over time the

name evolves into what it is now. It became the pet name used by the Lovegoods in front of their inquisitive daughter when they were talking about having sex.

Ron Weasley, after beating himself several times at Chess decided to take a break from his strategy session. While lying on his bed looking lovingly at his egg, he remembered it held a clue to a puzzle. "Two weeks until the second task, guess I've given the other competitors enough of a head start. I'll work out this clue now." He thought. He pulled out the parchment Moody had given him and started mouthing the words.

"Come seek us where our voices sound,
We cannot sing above the ground,"

"Well as I told Professor Moody," He thought, "That of course means the Prefect's Bathroom. Now the next lines."

"And while you are searching, ponder this:
We've taken what you'll sorely miss,"

"What did he say ponder meant? To drink? No....eat? No...wait...to think. Ok so I need to think about something sorely missed that someone has taken. Sorely? To sore means to fly of course, so it's something I would miss while flying. As Keeper I would miss a Quaffle. Well I wouldn't, but other keepers would. Yeah, that's it. A Quaffle. Someone has taken a Quaffle. So in the Prefect's bathroom I need to find it. This is easy, ok, next clue."

"An hour long you'll have to look,
And to recover what we took,"

"An hour? It isn't like the prefect's bathroom is that large." Ron thought. "Maybe it's going to be invisible or something. Still shouldn't be hard. Maybe we have to fight for it. Well after I've beaten the worst dragon of the lot, the other Champions don't stand a chance. Maybe the Veela and I can do hand to hand. I'd have to take it easy on her though since she's girl. Now the final lines."

"But past an hour- the prospect's black,
Too late, it's gone, it won't come back"

"Prospect...what's a prospect. Talking about it turning black, so maybe it's a type of meat in the feast to follow. Of course that's it. Someone will be cooking our food, and if we take more than an hour the food will be burnt and they will throw it out. So in the prefect's bathroom I have an hour to find a Quaffle that is hidden, and if I

don't find it in that time, I don't get the celebratory dinner. No problem, this is a simple task."

%%%%%%%%%

Barty Crouch Jr. was sitting at his desk contemplating his dilemma. He needed the ginger haired champion..er...boy...er..idiot to be at the lake and ready to compete in the second task in two weeks, but so far all attempts to get the over gassed ignoramus to comprehend what he needed to do had failed. "And now I can't even get close to him without a splitting headache appearing." He thought. "I wonder if I can do a classroom demonstration of the Cruciatus Curse with him as my volunteer. I really only have to tell the idiot Headmaster it's for the Greater Good and he'd have no problem with it."

Crouch reached into his supply of Fire Whiskey and pulled out a bottle. He reached for the glass and started to pour. Then remembering who he was contemplating, he pulled out his wand and an "Engorgio" later the cup swelled to three times its normal size. "Better." He thought and started pouring the drink.

"I can't even put him under the Imperius Curse to do the task." The bogus Defense Instructor thought. "His mind is so weak; he can't even shake off the effects once the curse is lifted*. He'd still be jumping in the lake three days later and that would be suspicious even to Dumbledore." Another glassful of the Ogden's finest disappeared. "I have two weeks; hopefully I can come up with some plan."

%%%%%%%%%

Lord Voldemort was sitting in his crib..er.. Evil Villain Restoration Module contemplating the information Wormtail had just given him. Though it had taken a while, his loyal servant in the castle had finally reported to him. It wasn't a Tom Weasley after all, but Wormtail's old master Ronald who was competing. Of course the Daily Prophet had reported the same thing weeks ago. "It is just so difficult to get a good Death Eater to help me when I need it most." He thought. Wormtail had explained how this Ron was the best friend of Harry Potter. He also had explained that the red haired young man seemed to hold much sway over the Dark Lord's nemesis as observed the previous year about some dispute over a broom. The evil infant thingy looked again at his servant's missive as he suckled

on his bottle of snake venom potion, "blah..blah..doing everything in my power to insure your directives are met...blah..blah...meeting much resistance to instructions by the subject..blah..blah...Harry Potter will be in the graveyard as you directed....blah blah..." As he continued reading he felt an emptying feeling in the lower part of his body. He looked at the bottle in his hand, "This stuff really goes right through you." He thought.

"Wormtail!" Voldemort cried out in his babyish voice.

"Yes Milord." The hunched back

"I need changing and cleaning again." Lord Voldemort replied.

"Yes Milord." Pettigrew replied.

"Your hands better not be cold this time." Voldemort said.

"Of course milord."

"Wait..Wait...your hands are cold.....CRUCIO!"

"AAAARRRRGGGGGGGGG"

%%%%%%%%%

Lucius Malfoy was also sitting in his chair drinking a bottle of Ogden's Finest Fire Whiskey. He had forgone the glass entirely. He looked again at the new betrothal contract for his son. The toad, uh..woman had agreed to marry his son with the full understanding that he was gay. She fully understood that it was her responsibility to produce a Malfoy heir no matter what methods she had to employ to 'encourage' Draco to cooperate. "Two hundred thousand galleons." Lucius thought. The woman knew he was desperate. "And I guess since she will have to use an unforgivable like the imperious to do what she needs done, I can understand." Lucius thought. He's had to take out a loan from Gringotts to pay the price, but that was of little concern. Once the two of them were married, Draco, being the man...uh...male in the house would control access to the family funds and Lucius was sure he could get Draco to pay back the loan. A smile played across the elder Malfoy's face because he knew this betrothal contract was iron clad. The two of them were to be married immediately following the second task by the Minister of Magic

himself. "Nothing short of death will stop this marriage and future heirs." Lucius thought as he finished off the rest of the bottle and reached for another one.

%%%%%%%%%

At the Ogden's Fire Whiskey production facility, the manager looked at another order from Hogwarts. "This is the fourteenth hundred bottle order this school year." He thought. "What are they doing at that school? Actually it's none of my business, but between Hogwarts and Malfoy Manor this has been one profitable year. I think it's time I raised my prices."

%%%%%%%%%

It was a Monday afternoon and Hermione was studying in the Library. Harry was in his double Divination Class and wouldn't be around until almost dinner time. Fred and George found her there studying for her Arithmancy class.

"We need your help." Fred said quietly as he looked around for Madam Pince.

Hermione looked up from her book and studied the twins carefully. She trusted the twins, but when it comes to the two of them trust took on a whole new meaning. Hermione knew she could trust them with her life, but not so much with her lunch or anything else that could be used against her in pursuit of their latest prank. "What can I do for you?" She asked finally.

"We want to get Ron's egg away from him and have a little fun."

"But he doesn't ever let it out of his sight."

"He even sleeps with it."

"Takes it to the bathroom with him."

"He even showers with it."

"He keeps talking to it. Saying things like 'I'll never be clueless again.'"

"Of course he can say that all he wants, but we know the truth."

"So what do you want me to do?" Hermione asked.

"We thought you might change your switching spell to go into the egg."

"What good would that do?"

"Well we wondered if you could actually make it more of a banishing charm so the..uh..air would continually goes in?" George explained.

"But nothing comes out." Fred continued the explanation.

"Eventually the egg would have to open due to the pressure and even Ron wouldn't be able to deal with that concentration of smell and noise."

"We hope he'll abandon it for a while, giving us a chance to modify it."

Hermione was certain that the twins were severely underestimating their brother's capability of dealing with the smell. Just his inability to smell his own breath should prove that point. "What do you want to do to his egg?" Hermione asked.

"You know how it wails when he opens it?"

Hermione nodded. A couple of weeks back Ron had walking around with it open all the time muttering something about he had a clue. Fortunately it stopped a few days later.

"We want it to start yelling Chudley Cannons suck and a few other choice insults whenever he opens it."

"But from what I understand, the Chudley Cannons do suck."

"True, but our brother hasn't figured that out yet."

"What if the egg were to burst open while in Harry's dorm room?" Hermione asked. She wouldn't want to be cause for any of her boyfriend's suffering.

"We'll make it up to him if does Hermione." George said.

"We'll give him some Canary Creams and Horntail Honeys to give to his cousin and other stuff we've been inventing." Fred said then his voice dropped to a conspiratorial whisper. "We even have one of the Veela figurines left we'll let him have as long.." his head spun as he looked around the library before continuing in a barely audible voice, "as the Beauxbaton champion doesn't find out."

"I think he doesn't need the Veela, and do you think his cousin would take another piece of candy from Harry?" Hermione asked.

"With the right compulsion charms? Yes." George said with a smile. "Ron ate a whole box of them on Christmas day remember."

Hermione smiled. Just the mention of Christmas day brought back the memory of the Yule Ball and how perfect it had been with Harry.

Fred and George saw the smile and exchanged a significant glance. They had noticed that mentioning Christmas day to Hermione instantly put her in a good mood and this had been their ploy to get what they wanted.

"Ok guys, I'll see what I can do." Hermione said still smiling. "But I want the Veela figurine, but you have to make it sprout pimples and then turn into a Canary." It would be another reminder of her defending Harry and of his love for her.

"Sure we can do that, but you know you'll have to do one other thing Hermione." Fred said.

"And what would that be?" Hermione asked suddenly looking cautiously at the Twins again.

"Just make sure Ron is sufficiently jealous." George replied. "Too insure a proper filling of the egg of course."

"We think you and Harry have developed a sure fire way to do that."

The smile along with a dreamy look returned to Hermione's face as she thought of the snogging she and Harry would be doing soon to help out the twins. She blushed a little as she could already taste

her boyfriend's lips on hers. "I think Harry and I might be able to do something."

"Thanks Hermione. We knew we could count on you." George said.

"So the twins want us to make Ron even more jealous?" Harry asked later in the evening. "Just so they can get that blasted egg?"

"Yes, but do you really need a good excuse to kiss me?" Hermione asked. She had worked out the banishing charm and the egg a little earlier.

"Now that you put it like that, no I guess not."

"Good, now shut up and get on with it Mr. Potter."

"Yes dear." The boy-who-kissed said to his girlfriend, and then followed her orders.

That evening when Ron entered the Common room, the two of them were engaged in a more heated snogging session than usual.

"PPPPPWWWWWTTTTT PPPPWWWWWTTTTT PPPWWWTTT – hisssss"

There was now a slight hiss at the end of each flatulence expulsion as the air was banished but nothing replaced it causing the air surrounding the area to rush in. it also pushed Ron a few inches forward every time.

"Hello Ron." Hermione said not taking her eyes from her boyfriend's emeralds. She gave Harry another passionate kiss.

"PPPPPWWWWWTTTTT PPPPWWWWWTTTTT PPPWWWTTT – hisssss"

"I know what you two are trying to do." Ron accused. "You're trying to make me jealous" - "PPPPPWWWWWTTTTT PPPPWWWWWTTTTT PPPWWWTTT – hisssss" - so I break that stupid contract and Harry gets my spot back in the tournament. "

"PPPPPWWWWWTTTTT PPPPWWWWWTTTTT PPPWWWTTT – hisssss"

"I've told you Ron, I don't want to complete in the tournament." Harry replied still gazing into almond colored eyes.

"PPPPPWWWWWT TTTT PPPPWWWWWT TTTT PPPWWWT T – hisssss"

"Yeah right." Ron replied as he continued to watch his old friends kiss. "Well it's not going to work." - "PPPPPWWWWWT TTTT PPPPWWWWWT TTTT PPPWWWT T – hisssss" – "There is no way I'm going to get jealous of you two."

"PPPPPWWWWWT TTTT PPPPWWWWWT TTTT PPPWWWT T – hisssss"

"I'm a Champion, and as soon as I get that Trophy and galleons I'll have eternal glory." Ron' eyes glazed over as they did when Harry first made the offer.

"Great Ron." Harry replied and he continued to stare into his girlfriend's eyes that had nothing but love in them for him. He brought his lips to hers again.

"PPPPPWWWWWT TTTT PPPPWWWWWT TTTT PPPWWWT T – hisssss"

"It's not going to work guys." Ron said as he stomped up the steps egg fully in hand. The sounds of this jealousy diminished with every step.

"Eternal Glory?" Hermione asked. "How many Tri-Wizard Champions have you heard of?"

"Only those that we read about in the books earlier." Harry replied and then with a thoughtful look, "Come to think of it, I can't even remember those names."

"So much for Eternal Glory." Hermione said.

"I much prefer to be eternally yours." Harry said earning him a kiss that kept a dreamy look plastered on his face for the next week.

%%%%%%%%%

It was a week before the second task and though Harry and Hermione had done their best to get Ron jealous as possible, and by the cacophony of sounds that were constantly heard in the Gryffindor Tower, their best was pretty good, the egg had yet to yield. At every flatulence emission, Harry, Hermione and the twins looked at the egg to see if that would be the one that made the difference, but nothing so far. Unbeknown to them was the fact that the egg was goblin made and goblins take pride in making sturdy quality items.

%%%%%%%%%

Draco Malfoy's day had started out decent. All of his bandages had been removed in that morning. A comb over and liberal amount of hair gel had allowed him to convince himself that no one would notice he was missing over half of his hair. "At least the hair isn't pink anymore." He thought. He decided having no eyebrows was better than just one, and cut the other one off as well. The ear he couldn't do too much about until he had enough hair grown out to cover it. But at breakfast his life fell apart. At the Slytherin table where he sat alone again, he had received a package from this father. Upon opening it he had discovered his father had entered into a new betrothal agreement for him. His attention was then taken by the accompanying letter.

Son,

I am sorry that your mother and I never knew of your sexual preferences before reading of your admissions in the Daily Prophet. At least now I understand why Severus never married. I must admonish you in the extreme to avoid further relations with your Head of House. Bringing further scandal to the Malfoy name needs to be avoided especially during these times. Now to the news I needed to discuss, I understand your preferences in this matter, but it is imperative for you to produce the heir of the Malfoy line. I took the opportunity of arranging this latest marriage for you with a Ms. Deloras Umbridge. She is highly regarded by our current Minister of Magic and though she is a bit older than you, I feel you two can have some kind of relationship. I hope you can see by the accompanying photo that she is appropriately un-womanly enough for you to hopefully develop some feelings for her. She knows of your preferences and has agreed you may have as many male

partners as you desire as long as they are from respectable pureblood families. The wedding will be immediately following the Triwizard tournament's second task. I have already arranged for travel plans for you and your wife to a remote island in the Mediterranean where you can enjoy quality time getting to know each other. Your bride says she already has her bikini picked out.

Your Father

Lucius

"Bikini?" Draco thought. "Maybe this won't be so bad. Even if she's ugly, if her body is nice enough for a bikini..." He pulled the accompanying photo out of the envelope to look at the future Mrs. Draco Malfoy and promptly threw up. An hour later he managed enough energy to stumble back to his bed in his dorm, where he laid down and cried. His father had been correct in one part, Draco had developed feelings for his bride to be already, a very very deep feeling of revulsion. Later he fell back to sleep where dreams of the beautiful Millicent Bullstrode enticed the young Slytherin. Beautiful when compared to his new betrothed that is.

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Millicent Bullstrode had had her dreams shattered by the young Malfoy. She had been in a constant state of depression ever since the incident earlier. A letter from her father had changed all of that in a matter of minutes one morning a week before the Triwizard second task.

Dear Millie,

I am truly sorry that your betrothed betrayed your trust and your marriage will not happen, but as you know the Betrothal price was twenty-five thousand galleons which because of the public admittance of your past betrothed of having an affair with your head of house is in default to our family. Since you are the one who was wronged, I turn the entire amount over to you. I had the money placed into your vault the morning I sent this owl.

Again let me say how sorry I am my dearest Millie, but I did stumble upon a bit of information that might make you feel a little better. I was at the ministry yesterday and found out that your past

betrothed's father has negotiated a new contract with a current Ministry employee by the name of Deloras Umbridge. Why would this cheer you up you might ask? To answer that question, please inspect the enclosed photo of young Malfoy's new bride to be.

I only wish you the best Millie.

Dad

Millicent reached into the envelope and pulled out a photo and one word came to mind, "Ribbit."

It didn't take long for copies of the photo to be made and passed around Slytherin's common room; from there it was leaked to a Ravenclaw, and within the next day the whole school knew of Draco Malfoy's new bride to be. The castle was soon filled with the sound of toads where ever the Heir of Malfoy went. The twins came through again with little frogs that hopped behind Draco where ever he went. He found out the hard way that if he tried to destroy them with magic, as magic touched one, it would immediately divide and become two. By the end of the day Draco was being followed by over fifty little frog ribbiting the whole way.

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It was a week before the final task and Barty Crouch Jr. noticed the youngest Champion seemed to be in a good mood as he wandered the halls with his golden egg firmly under his arm. The headache from the sight of him was less than it had been previously so the Death Eater decided to try to again.

"Weasley."

"Yes sir."

"What have you done about the clue?"

"Solved it sir." Ron replied. "Wasn't that hard once I really thought about it."

"Was it possible?" Moody thought. "Could he actually have figured it out? Only one way to find out." He mentally tried to prepare himself and then finally asked the question, "What do you think it is then?"

"Why should I tell you? You might tell the other champions." Ron replied.

The headache immediately started getting worse. "Look Weasley, I'm not going to tell any other Champion, I'm...I'm just trying to give you a hand since you're the youngest."

Ron considered his Defense Professor's words for three seconds before his thoughts were interrupted by thoughts of his next meal and he developed a smile and he turned and started to go find food. Moody's hand shot out and grabbed him. "The answer?"

"Oh...yeah." Ron said. "As I said, it was easy once I actually started to think about it. I know that I have to find a Quaffle in the prefect's bathroom in less than an hour or my food will burn and I won't get to eat."

Barty Crouch Jr.'s mouth dropped open as he stood there unable to comment. His mind whirled though any possible way the clue could actually have been interpreted in that manner. Seconds became a couple of minutes as no answer came to mind. The headache went from sharpened pain to how can there be this much pain in the world level in a very short time. Crouch slumped against the wall then slid down until he was sitting on the floor. His unfocused gaze locked onto the red hair of the one person he wanted to kill more than any other. Through the pain only one thought emerged, "How can there be this much stupidity locked inside of a single mind?"

Ron watched his defense teacher slump to the ground and smiled. "He's amazed at my ability to solve it without his help. He'll never underestimate me again." He trotted off down the hallway headed for the kitchens wondering what prospect tasted like.

When Crouch finally was able to stand again he promptly canceled all of his classes. He knew he would be too busy consuming fire whiskey. It took twenty-four bottles to finally get the images of Ron Wesley out of his brain, but in his drunken state of mind he finally came up with a solution. Pulling out a Quill and parchment he jotted down a note and finally stumbled to the Owlery where he tied the letter and a small package onto an Owl's leg.

%%%%%%%%%

The next morning an Owl landed in front of Ron as he was finishing off his seventh helping of eggs and bacon. The Owl had a letter and a package. He quickly opened the letter and looked at it. He noticed the writing was barely legible and ink was smeared but then he saw what was written.

Dear Ronald Weasley or shall I say Sir Handsome,

I am a secret admirer of yours. I think not only that you are you very handsome, but your heroics during the first task were admirable. I know as intelligent as you are, that you have already solved the clue that was in the egg, but in case you haven't I would like to offer my assistance. My father works in the Magical Games and Sports part of the Ministry and I overheard what needs to be done. The day of the second task they are going to take something that you hold most dear and hide it in Black Lake. During the task you will have an hour to recover what they took. Now in the package I've enclosed is something called Gillyweed. Right before the task you will need to eat it and it will let you breath underwater for the hour. DO NOT EAT IT UNTIL THEN!

Good luck my Champion,

Your Secret Admirer and number one fan.

Ron looked around the Great Hall for anyone looking at him. Several girls were looking at him and giggling. Though Ron didn't realize it, they were looking and giggling because in his attempt to eat breakfast, hold his egg and read the letter he had smeared a good portion of the breakfast across his face and into his hair. Ron looked again at the letter. "Of course if I'd looked at the clue one more time, I'm sure I would have figured it out."

%%%%%%%%%

The night before the final task, Harry, Hermione, Fred and George had to admit defeat in getting the egg to burst. Harry and Hermione had done their best and the twins had to admit from the sounds being emitted constantly from their brother, their best had been pretty good, but the egg never burst. For their efforts the Twins did give Harry the candy for his cousin and Hermione the little Veela Figurine.

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The night before the final task, Cedric and Cho Chang were going over the next day's task. Neither of them was sure what item would be taken from Cedric for him to find. He went over the bubblehead charm again and again. And just to make sure if the charm failed, Cho helped Cedric practice holding his breath for as long as possible. Of course the practice of this part was providing much enjoyment for the both of them, since the method was to only breathe through your mouth and then they would cover each other's mouth with their own for as long as they could go without interruption. It was later that evening that Marietta Edgecomb had been sent to tell Cho that Professor Flitwick needed to see her. Right after she left, a house elf popped into the room holding an envelope by its corner. Upon seeing the recipient was in the room, he dropped it immediately and apparated away.

Cedric looked at the envelope and noticed there was no name written on the outside. Wondering if this was something to notify him of what they would be taking he opened it quickly and read.

Cedric my fellow Hogwarts Champion,

Just wanted to know if you're up to a late night party and wand polishing tonight? I've invited Krum and the Veela as well. I'll expect you at 11pm in the Gryffindor Tower.

Ron

Cedric threw down the letter and pulled out his wand and quickly practiced his banishing charm. "Definitely not what I would miss the most. Too bad they aren't taking the thing I would miss the least." Cedric thought, and a thought struck him. "Cho? Would they actually take a person?"

%%%%%%%%%

The night before the final task Krum was concerned, he knew he had to go into the lake the next day but the Aquavirius Maggots Luna had told him about had him worried. He pulled open his trunk and pulled out the bottle of pink toenail polish she had given him and started to put it on. "I'm glad Luna told me that this will keep the

Maggots away." Krum thought as he continued to apply the polish. "I can only transform into a half shark tomorrow, my toes must still be visible."

A few minutes later a house elf popped into his cabin on the ship holding a letter by its corner. Upon seeing the recipient was in the room, he dropped it and apparated away. Krum, with the bits of cotton between his toes waddled over and picked up the letter. "Wonder if it is about what they will take from me." Krum, like Cedric didn't know what he would miss the most. "My Broom maybe." He thought. He opened the letter and read

Victor my good friend,

It's the night before our second big day. I'm holding a party and wand polishing get together tonight. I'll be expecting you at 11pm in the Gryffindor Tower. If you want to bring your broomstick and your balls, I'll polish them for you.

Your Co-Champion,

Ron Weasley

"I might not know what I would miss the most, but I sure know what I would miss the least." Krum thought as his own letter incinerated in front of him from a burning hex and like Cedric, it made him think. "Would they take a person? Would they take Luna?" Krum immediately started applying the toenail polish with more vigor.

%%%%%%%%%

The night before the second task, Fleur was sitting in her cabin in the Beauxbaton Carriage looking in a mirror. Though the pimples had finally faded away and her perfect complexion had returned, this evening it was more of a self reflection she was contemplating. The laughter from the other Beauxbaton girls from the last month was still ringing in her ears. Every time she had ventured into the common area of the Carriage she would hear TA WEET. Overall her experience with the Granger witch has been life changing. For once in her life Fleur had been on the receiving end of the abuse and though at first she had been extremely angry and had vowed revenge, over time her self-imposed isolation had caused the young Veela to reflect on her life and she found she didn't like what she

had become. She finally realized that the more enemies she made, the more chances of making an enemy who is stronger and smarter than herself and that could only lead to a life of problems. As she stared at her reflection in the mirror she remembered how Harry Potter had broken her power because of the love he had for his lady.

"I want someone to love me that way. Someone to love me for who I am and not lust for me for what I am." She thought to herself. That night she had made another vow, one to thank the young witch that had helped her see what she herself could never have seen without help.

With all the time she had had, the egg hadn't been a real problem to crack. She thought that her old self would have just walked to the lake and using her allure convinced forty young men to jump in the lake and go find her missing object, whatever it may be. "Not now." She thought. "I will do this. I've got my bubblehead charm ready to go. I just wished I knew what they were going to take of mine." She looked around her room and couldn't see anything that she would sorely miss. She'd even talked it over with her father and sister when they had come earlier in the day. She had seen the Hogwarts Headmaster looking at her on occasions during that time, but could not figure out what he might have been looking at. When she turned away from the mirror a house elf popped into her room holding an envelope by the corner, upon spotting the recipient was in the room he immediately dropped it and apparated away.

"Wonder if this has to do with what they are going to take from me?" She thought and opened the letter and read.

Hey Veela Chick,

Party tonight, Gryffindor tower at 11pm. If you're nice I'll let you help me polish my wand.

Your handsomest Co-Champion

Ron

PS. We still have that date to go on; sorry we didn't hook up for the Yule Ball.

It took a lot of willpower for the new and improved Fleur Delacour to not destroy her own room. After destroying the letter she promised herself that if the idiot slaps her on the rear again he would not live through the event.

"Just wished they would take what I would miss the least. But I definitely wouldn't go looking for it." Fleur thought and her own mind put pieces together. "They wouldn't take a person would they? Gabrielle? My sister is only one who ever even speaks to me." The new and improved Fleur realized now why that was so, but it was her sister that she loved most dearly.

%%%%%%%%%

The house-elf would had been required to deliver the envelopes came back to the kitchen after the mission was complete and after scrubbing his hands thoroughly to rid himself of any trace of Ron Wheezy he joined Winky in Butterbeer after Butterbeer.

%%%%%%%%%

Ron Weasley was outside the portrait hole at ten forty five pm waiting for his guests to arrive. When eleven had come and gone, he thought "They're all just trying to be fashionably late." By twelve he started wondering if the stupid house-elf did what he was suppose to do, and finally at one am he came the conclusion all the other Champions were still busy trying to figure out the clue and didn't have time to join him that evening. "Tomorrow is going to be my day." He thought for not the first time.

%%%%%%%%%

Later that night, the Headmaster made his way into the fourth year Gryffindor boy's dorm and after casting a sleeping charm into the room to ensure everyone stayed asleep, he started looking for the golden egg to be the hostage. After he was unable to find it in Ron's trunk or around his bed, he silently cast, "Accio golden egg." It came flying out of the curtains surrounding the bed with the red headed Champion's arms still firmly wrapped around it. Dumbledore cast the Body bind curse causing Ron's body to snap into a vertical position, finally letting go of the egg. Then he levitated the champion back into the bed, undid the body bind and closed the curtains, He then picked up the egg and left.

"That's my last hostage; I've already kidnapped Miss Chang, Miss Delacour and Miss Lovegood, now I just need to put them all under the frigidly cold waters of the lake until tomorrow." The Headmaster thought as he walked away. "Nothing like kidnapping people to bring about international cooperation. The things I do for the Greater Good."

%%%%%%%%%

The morning of the second task Ron awoke feeling a little stiff and that something was amiss. It only took him several seconds to realize what the problem was.

"MY EGG!" He screamed. "WHO TOOK MY EGG!" He looked over at Harry's bed and saw the messy hair boy-who-lived waking up from his screaming. "You did it, you're jealous of me being Champion and you took my egg."

Harry shook his head to clear the cobwebs created by being awoken by a screaming lunatic while dreaming of his gorgeous girlfriend. Looking over at Ron he said "I have no clue what you're talking about Ron. I've been asleep the whole time." Harry scratched his head still trying to awaken fully.

"Yeah right. You just can't stand anyone else having any glory."

"Ron, for the last time, I am not jealous of you, I have no reason to be jealous of you. I have everything I could possibly want in life right now." Harry replied. "I have a beautiful girlfriend who loves me..."

"Pfft"

Something happened that hadn't happened in a while, a smell exploded throughout the room. Harry, Neville, Seamus and Dean Thomas were all unprepared. They were all almost overcome before the survival instincts kicked in and they grabbed for their wands.

"What happened to the banishing charm?" Harry wondered. All ideas of returning to sleep quickly vanished from any of the other occupants of the room. While Ron continued throwing out wild accusations of who stole his egg, from reiterating that Harry had stole it from jealousy to the Minister of Magic grabbed it to keep Ron

from becoming a threat to his administration, Harry took a quick shower and rushed out of the dorm room looking for the woman he loved. He hoped she might have some answers.

Fortunately she was already awake herself waiting in the common room. Harry gave her a quick kiss and pulled her out the portrait hole. He quickly told her about the missing egg and the fact the smell had returned.

"That can only mean the egg isn't in the castle anymore." Hermione explained. "It's like the switching spell, once it is out of range the spell will fail."

"Any ideas who might have taken it?" Harry asked. "He thinks I took it because I'm jealous of him."

Hermione snorted. "As if that would ever happen."

"That's what I told him, I said I had everything that I could ever want including the most beautiful girl who loves me.."

"Hence the smell this morning, I presume?" Hermione asked as she smiled at her boyfriend.

"Yes." Harry admitted.

"Well we'll just have to stay away from him until the second task is over." Hermione said. "If the egg isn't found by then I'll adjust the spell."

"Have any idea what the task is going to be?"

"Well obviously because of all the stands that were built near Black Lake, it's going to be there." Hermione said. "I hope Ron's better prepared this time."

A memory came to Harry at that time. It had been just a muttering by Madam Pomfrey but for some reason it came crystal clear.

"Got to double my supply of burn ointment and better get a reverse drowning potion brewing..."

"Hermione, I think Ron has to do something that he might drown trying to accomplish."

"Why would you say that?" Hermione asked.

"Remember when Madam Pomfrey asked who I was having replace me?" Harry started. "When I told her it was Ron she started saying something about burn ointments and anti-drowning potions."

"Then she knew about the dragons, hence the burn ointment, and the anti-drowning potion..." Hermione's voice had dropped to a faint whisper. "Should we tell him?"

"Think he would believe us?" Harry asked. "You know what he would say."

"That we were just trying to get him to give up his spot. If Madam Pomfrey is prepared, he'll be fine."

"I hope so. Hopefully Ron doesn't do anything stupid." Harry commented.

Hermione looked down at the ground as a worried expression passed over her face. "Uh oh." She thought, "This could be bad."

%%%%%%%%%

Ron Weasley was frantic as no one could tell him where his egg was. He was so concerned he was only able to eat four platefuls of food at breakfast. He kept looking around the Great Hall for any sign of the Golden Egg. He knew someone there was jealous of him and had taken it.

"I'll ask Moody." He thought. "With that magical eye of his, he'll find it for me."

%%%%%%%%%

Deep under the waters of Black Lake, three hostages and a golden egg were tied to strands of water plants. Throughout the early morning hours the increased pressure of the water weakened the seals of the Goblin made egg.

%%%%%%%%%

At nine thirty am Ron Weasley was in his Dorm readying himself again. "Polished Wand? Check. Gilly whatever it is? Check. Book? Got it. Snack?" Again he patted down his robes before remembering he had his snack right after breakfast. When he opened Harry's trunk he found a bagful of creams. "Those look like Canary Creams, I better not take those." He thought as he picked up the bag and put it in his robes.

At Ten am he was with all the other Champions beside Black Lake. As he looked over the stands to see if he could find his Secret Admirer, he noticed Draco Malfoy dressed in Dress Robes standing next to some ugly old lady. As Ron looked closer he realized Draco wasn't actually standing, more like propped up against a tree as he stood rigidly with his hands down his side. His eyes continued to wander around the stands and they came to rest on Hermione again sitting in Harry's lap. The frosted breathes aimed at each other as they stared not at the Champions or the lake, but at each other.

"PPPWWWT TTTPPPPPPWWWT TTTT PPPWWWT TTTT
PPPPPPWWWT TTTT – hiss"

Harry and Hermione heard the flatulence but more important the hiss at the end and breathed a sigh of relief. They knew the egg was somewhere nearby.

%%%%%%%%%

Deep below the waters the additional pressure was enough to cause a single bubble of gas to escape from the pressure weakened golden egg, as it traveled up toward the surface, it came in contact with a tamed pet Grindylow which immediately went into convulsions and died. The merchild who had been swimming with his pet immediately swam back to his parent's house and cried about what happened.

%%%%%%%%%

"Welcome all to the second task of the TriWizard Tournament here at Hogwarts." Dumbledore said. "For this task the Champions will be spending all of their time underwater so you the guest will get to

view the wonderful view of this lake while sitting outside on a cold February day waiting for something to happen."

Hermione looked at Harry with a questioning look followed by "I could be inside warm in a library studying, but I'm required to come out here on one of the coldest mornings of the year and do nothing for ever how long this is going to take?"

"Doesn't sound too bright does it?" Harry asked. "I wonder who came up with the events?"

"Whoever it was, is a bloody idiot." Hermione replied as she looked around. "At least they could have done is warm the stands." She pulled out her wand and with a couple of deft motions and a muttered spell the bench they were sitting on started warming. "That'll keep us warm."

"Until it does, I'll do my best to keep you from freezing my love." Harry said as he wrap his arms more tightly around his girlfriend.

"Maybe I should remove the warming spell then." Hermione said as her body got closer to his. Looking into Harry's eyes she whispered, "My lips are cold Mr. Potter."

"My mistake, I shall take care of that right now." He replied and started warming her lips and her tongue. As the kiss progressed Hermione found the rest of her body warming as well.

Ron was still looking into the stands looking for the secret admirer and saw the passionate kissing Harry and Hermione were engaged in.

"PPPWWWWT TTTPPPPPPPPWWTTTT PPPWWWWTTTT
PPPPPPPPWWTTTT – hiss"

%%%%%%%%%

The Egg released a stream of bubbles this time. A school of fish passing overhead were the unsuspecting victims as they swam into the bubbles. Several of them died instantly and floated to the surface.

The Merfather who was investigating the death of his merchild's pet Grindylow witnessed the death and immediately reported what he saw to the merperson council. The merpeople had been assured there were no dangers to be had with holding the hostages.

%%%%%%%%%

"Now sit back and continue to enjoy this very cold February day while we finish the last minute preparations and get this event under way." Dumbledore continued in his speech.

%%%%%%%%%

"PPPWWWT TTTPPPPPPWWWT TTTT PPPWWWT TTTT
PPPPPPWWWT TTTT – hiss"

"PPPWWWT TTTPPPPPPWWWT TTTT PPPWWWT TTTT
PPPPPPWWWT TTTT – hiss"

Ron's focus was entirely on the couple in the stands.

%%%%%%%%%

More bubbles poured out of the egg in the middle of the egg and the emergency merperson council meeting was help immediately.

%%%%%%%%%

"Now we have taken from each of the Champions that which they will miss the most." The Headmaster said. "From the Beauxbaton Champion, we have taken her little sister." Dumbledore remember the crying child he had had to stun before putting her under the magical spell.

"Where is my sister?" Fleur demanded. "Who gave you permission to take my sister. My father doesn't know anything about it."

Dumbledore ignored the comments as he continued "From the Durmstrang Champion we have taken one of our own students, a Miss Luna Lovegood that he seems to have grown fond of."

"If a single hair of my Luna is injured old man you'll have me to answer to." Krum said fiercely as his pink toenails glinted in the morning sun.

"From Hogwart's first Champion Cedric Diggory, we have taken a Miss Cho Chang."

"And if anything happens to her, I will join Victor in his revenge." Diggory said.

"And finally from Hogwart's second Champion, Mr., Ronald Weasley we have taken his Golden Egg."

"MY EGG! WHERE IS MY EGG!" Ron cried out and he ran over to the Headmaster and started pulling on his robes and crying.

"Each of these hostages are currently in the lake somewhere and it's up to the Champion's to find them." Dumbledore continued as he pulled his robes out of Ron's hands.

Upon hearing his egg was in the lake Ron jumped up and ran into the water and started looking around.

Bagman started lining up the Champions beside the lake, pulling Ron out of the water to do so. "MY EGG! I have to get to MY EGG!"

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The council came to the immediate determination that the air breathers were in default and the Merpeople would no longer help in the contest. They immediately started cutting the hostages loose. One of the merpeople knocked the egg as they were slicing the vines of the water plant holding it and a stream of bubbles came pouring out of it. A few came in contact with that Merperson and he immediately started to convulse. Only the prompt arrival of a Merperson medical team saved his life.

The rest of the merpeople realized they need the egg out of the lake quickly. As the other Hostages were being pulled toward shore, a call was sent out for the Lake emergency removal system.

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Lucius Malfoy was keeping an eye on his son. He had already tried to run away four times this morning. Finally Lucius had to put his son in a body bind and carry him down here to the lake in preparation for his wedding. Currently he was propped up against a tree next to his lov...well next to his future bride. "Nothing can go wrong now." He thought. Unfortunately for Lucius, Karma had just left his Karate class and was ready to kick Lucius's arse.

%%%%%%%%%

"The second task will start on my whistle. They have precisely an hour to recover what has been taken from them."

Ron remembering the instructions given to him from his secret admirer pulled out the Gillyweed and crammed it in his mouth, not just one but three of them. He also pulled out the bag of creams and shoveled several of those in his mouth as well to tide him over until the event was finished.

On the count of three, then. One . . . two"

Bagman's voice fell silent as heads started bobbing out of the water. Merpeople started shoving hostages onto the shore.

Ron saw all the hostages but not his egg. "WHERE'S my...." The rest fell silent as the strangest thing happened, the mixture of Gillyweed, Canary Creams and Horntail Honey's turned the fourth Champion into a five and a half foot tall fire breathing Duck which had to keep ducking its head under the water to breath. "QUACK! QUACK!"

Dumbledore spent several minutes conversing with the Merperson who seemed to be in charge. The Merperson was violently shaking his head while pointing at the middle of the lake, and when that didn't seem to get the point across he violent shook his fist. Finally the headmaster joined the other judges in a meeting before he finally announced. "The Merpeople have informed me that a serious contamination issue has developed in the lake making it unsafe for the hostages or the Champions to be there. Therefore the second task is canceled.

The five and a half foot duck continued swimming around breathing fire and ducking his head under the water quacking it's head off as it looked for it's golden egg.

%%%%%%%%%

The Giant Squid had finally made it to the mermaid village and was gingerly prodding the egg which still released a bubble or two every time. After several more prods the Squid attached a sucker to the egg and started swimming toward the surface.

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Lucius wasn't too disappointed to have the event canceled as it meant he could get his son married and off on his honeymoon an hour earlier. That would give him more time to find a nice bottle of Fire Whiskey to help him forget. He pulled out his wand and cast the counter to his son's body bind, but before Draco could run, he had cast a leg locking curse.

"We are gathered here on this cold February day to unite this boy and this delightful lady who is always helping me in the Ministry in Marriage." The voice of Minister Fudge ranged out.

In the middle of the lake the tentacle of the squid broke the surface of the water and a golden object flew away from it directly for the air breathers on the shore.

"Do you Deloras Umbridge take this boy to be your Husband."

"I..URK!"

The golden egg's flight path had taken a perfect arc. After it made it's way to the top of it's ascent, the descent to the ground was blocked by the head of the bride to be. Upon contact the egg had split entirely open and the last two weeks worth of gas spilled out around the wedding party. Once the air had been cleaned, Madam Pomfrey was called to check on the toad..er..woman in white. It didn't take the Poppy long to determine that Deloras Umbridge had croaked.

Lucius kicked the egg that had caused all the problems and sat down and cried.

The egg rolled over toward the water, where the five and a half foot duck climbed out and sat upon it to make sure no one else stole it from him. Every so often he had to climb off and go put his head under the water and return to sit on it some more. Since Ron had consumed all of the Gillyweed at once, it was several hours before he transformed back and was able to leave the lake. The last words he heard as all the other people started back up the hill to the Castle were.

"Feast will start in just a few minutes."

"QUACK QUACK QUACK!"

*this is actually true, since in the book Ron is still skipping after class from the imperious curse.

It was several days after the canceled second task and Harry and Hermione were once again at breakfast in the Great Hall. They were talking about a Transfiguration assignment between smiles and small kisses when a blue sleeved arm reached between them and laid a wand down on the table. Looking up they both saw Fleur Delacour standing there. Both Harry and Hermione pulled their wands out quickly.

"Mademoiselle Granger." The part Veela Champion said in a soft tone. "I've come to apologize. I've given you my wand to prove I have no ill will. It is up to you to decide if you return it."

Hermione eyed the Beauxbaton carefully and finally nodded and said. "I'm listening."

Fleur's eyes blinked as she seemed to want to look away, but she held them firm looking into Hermione's. "I...I..did you and Monsieur Potter wrong after the Yule Ball. I admit zinking I could steal your boyfriend's affections and didn't consider or even desire to consider yours or 'is feelings in ze matter." Fleur paused to catch her breath as wetness showed in her eyes. "Zanks to you, I've 'ad a long time to zink about a lot of zings. Everyone says you are ze smartest witch in ze school."

"I wouldn't...." Hermione started.

"But everyone else would." Harry said to her causing Hermione to blush.

"Zen you're obviously familiar with ze idea of having the power to do something can corrupt your zoughts into believing you 'ave ze right to do zat zing."

"I am very familiar with it." Hermione replied. "In the muggle world there was a Lord Acton who in denying that the Pope, which is a religious leader, was infallible gave a speech in which a quote that even today stands alone in its understanding. It simply says, 'Power tends to corrupt, absolute power corrupts absolutely.' "

"Exactly Mademoiselle." Fleur replied. "I 'ave abilities zat allow me to do certain zings, and I fell under zat trap. I would like to say I zink I am a better person now. I see ze love your beaux 'as for you, and

wish now to find someone who cares for me as much without influence of my powers."

Hermione studied the Beauxbaton witch, looking for any duplicity in her tone or actions. After staring at her for a minute or so, she finally replied. "Miss Delacour, what you did was beyond reprehensible and it will take more than a simple apology to make up for it. However, I actually believe what you are saying is true and you do want to be a better person."

"Zank you."

Hermione looked at the wand laying on the table before turning back to Fleur. "But you have to apologize to more than just me. I will give your wand to your Headmistress. I will request that only when you and your fellow student, I think her name is Michelle appear together requesting it, is she to return it to you."

"But my.." Fleur had started to complain that she would need her wand to continue her studies but immediately stopped and considered. She looked over at the Ravenclaw table where her fellow students were sitting, some of whom were looking at her. Fleur knew that she had to do it, and she would be subject to some harsh responses from her schoolmates. She turned back to Hermione and with a nod, "Zat's fair."

"If I hear that you attack them as a Veela, I will also teach them the spell I cast upon you earlier." Hermione continued.

Again Fleur nodded and turned to start walking away then she turned back one more time and said quietly, "Zank you." Then another question came to her "Can I turn into a Veela and attack ze fourth Champion if 'e slaps my butt again?"

"Ron?"

"Yes, zat is 'is name."

"As long as you don't kill him." Hermione replied and could have sworn a look of disappointment crossed Fleur's face. A little later that day she and Harry walked to the Beauxbaton Carriage where she discussed the matter with Madame Maxine and also talked to Michelle where she requested that the young Beauxbaton witch judge

Fleur on her sincerity of wanting to change rather than past injuries inflicted.

It was three weeks later that Hermione saw Michelle and Fleur walking together talking to each other. When they saw Hermione, Fleur and Michelle smiled at her, and Fleur raised her hand showing her wand in it. Hermione returned their smile and nodded to the two French witches before continuing to her class.

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The Weasley twins followed up the second task by introducing the waddling, fire breathing golden egg laying duck figurine along with Ducky Delights. Ducky Delights were delightful tasting toffee that transforms the eater of the treat into a fire breathing duck. Fred and George gave several boxes to Ron with the appropriate compulsion charms on them. It was rare not to see an overly large duck roasting his own food in the great hall for several days afterwards.

%%%%%%%%%

Lucius Malfoy was once again drinking heavily of Ogden's finest. He'd just had to sell some of his hidden dark art collection to Borgin and Burkes he had recently purchased. He had spent almost all of his gold for the collection but knew that he could sell it for two to three times the amount of purchase once the Dark Lord had returned and the devices were not illegal anymore. He'd of course had to sell to pay the monthly payment for the loan he had taken out from the Goblins at Gringotts to cover the price of the betrothal agreement to that damn toad lady and to pay his bill to Odgen's distillery. "My son's betrothed left everything to.."Lucius snashed his teeth in memory of Umbridge's will,

"I leave my entire estate to the Ministry in hopes they use it to improve the conditions of the Dementors of Azkaban as I have found they are the only beings that I have ever felt a kindred toward. Their icy cold, soul sucking abilities always brings a warm feeling to my heart."

Lucius slammed down his glass causing it to shatter. He had just cleaned up the mess himself ("Damn that Potter brat for freeing my servant") and was still seething when an official looking owl started tapping on his window. The senior Malfoy quickly realized it was a

Gringott's owl. "What do they want?" He asked himself. "I paid them on time." Malfoy knew the dangers of reneging on a Goblin based loan instrument. He opened the window and took the letter and read.

"Lucius Malfoy,

The loan you received from us on the tenth of February of this year is now in default. You have failed to pay the required monthly payment constituting one twelfth of the principle and the accrued interest. The entire loan amount is now due in full including all loan interest that would have accrued during the term of the loan. Please present yourself tomorrow at Gringotts to pay your debt in full.

Gorpus

Default Loan Collector

Lucius stared at the letter for a few minutes before the outrage took him over. "How dare they accuse me of defaulting on my loan? I would never do such thing if there was a chance of being caught." He thought. "Tomorrow I'll go talk to this Gorpus and straighten him out." Lucius pulled out another glass and continued his drinking. His mind continued to churn over various problems in his life. "My liquid assets are almost gone." He looked down at his bottle of Fire Whiskey, "speaking of which, times to get a new bottle of this liquid asset." He crossed the room and opened his liquor cabinet and pulled out a new bottle of Fire Whiskey and just as he was about to close it, he decided it might be better to go ahead and have two bottles. He reached in and grabbed the second bottle as well. Once he was settled back in his favorite chair his mind turned back to his problems. "My liquid assets are almost gone because of the Dark Magic collection I just purchased, my investments are crap, the Dark Lord is coming back, my wife hasn't slept with me in almost fifteen years and my son is gay and getting more sex with an old friend of mine than I get with my wife." It took both bottles to soothe Lucius' nerves that evening.

The next day Lucius Malfoy made his way to Diagon Alley and quickly strolled to Gringotts his cane tapping the ground with every second step. As he crossed the wide expanses Goblin after Goblin raised their heads to stare at the Wizard whose cane was causing the tapping noise. Every time it came in contact with the marble floor the Tap echoed throughout the lobby. Goblins everywhere were

losing the count of galleons because of it. Lucius finally found the shortest line only to find it was manned by the slowest Goblin. All the other lines moved much more rapidly. After waiting in line for almost an hour he finally reached the teller stand.

"How may I help you today Wizard?" The goblin snarled as he looked down from his lofty seat at Lucius.

"I have need to speak to.." Lucius looked down at the parchment he had received the previous day. "a Gorpus."

"May I see the letter?" the teller asked.

Lucius handed over the letter and after a quick perusal by the teller he noticed the teller make a quick hand motion. Immediately he found three armed goblins surrounding him. "What is the meaning of this?" Malfoy snarled.

"You have been found in default of a loan Mr. Malfoy. That is a very serious offense to the Goblins in general and especially those in this bank. This is to make sure you do not leave Gringotts without settling your affairs with us. Now please make your way down that corridor and Gorpus' office is the fourth one on the right."

Malfoy's hand tightened around the knob of his cane which was also his wand as he glared at the pompous teller. When he hadn't moved in twenty seconds or so, he felt the point of a goblin bourn spear touch him in the back. His hand loosened on cane and he turned and made his way to the correct office.

"Come in Mr. Malfoy." The goblin behind the desk said when Lucius open the door to an office. "I'm Goblin Gorpus." The Goblin looked past the blonde haired Malfoy as if looking for something. "No trunk of Galleons?" He asked. "I specifically stated in the letter that you must pay the entire amount to fulfill your debt to this bank."

"I dispute that I am in default." Malfoy sneered at the Goblin. "I made my payment on time just last week."

"Hmmm..." Gorpus hummed. "I have your records right here, you attempted to pay twenty thousand galleons last week. That money was returned to your vault because it did not cover the amount due."

"WHAT?" Malfoy roared but quickly quieted down when two spear points touched his back rather sharply. After a look back at the guards who had the spears touching him, he turned back to Gorpus and continued. "Twenty thousand galleons was more than what I owed. I calculated it myself. One twelfth of the loan is less than seventeen thousand and a month's interest at ten percent is less than another seventeen hundred galleons. If anything I OVERPAID." Lucius's voice was once again rising which he became aware of when the spears reminded him.

Gorpus looked amused. He reached into one of the many drawers in his desk and pulled out a scroll. When unrolled it was at least ten feet long. His finger ran down the scroll until it came to a certain paragraph. He nodded and his smile grew wider. "Do you recognize this document?" he asked Lucius.

Lucius glanced at it and seeing the header of it, he nodded. It was the loan agreement between the bank and himself.

"And this is your signature and seal?" Gorplus asked Lucius.

Again the Elder Malfoy looked closely at the bottom of the document that was stretched out on the enormous desk in front of him. Seeing his signature and seal of his family ring he again nodded.

Gorplus looked at the three guards in the room. "Bear witness that Mr. Malfoy has agreed this document is his loan agreement and has also affirmed he did indeed sign it." The three guards all nodded at the higher ranking Goblin. Gorplus looked again at Lucius, "Now, Mr. Malfoy I think you didn't read section forty-eight subsection A, sub sub section eighteen which clearly states that the ten percent interest is per WEEK and not annually."

The color of Malfoy's face turned as white as his hair and he quickly bent over the document and looked for the offending entry on the contract. He had to squint to finally make out the extremely small writing. When he finally looked up he could see the Goblin grinning at him.

"Now Mr. Malfoy, since you missed your first scheduled payment, the entire loan is in default. Per section nine-two of the contract, the entire principal along with ALL interest that would have been paid over the life of the loan is due immediately." Gorplus said. "Since

you missed your first payment, we have the right to presume nonpayment throughout the whole year, which puts you at owing us twenty five million-eight hundred thousand galleons. Add in the legal fees and other fees as spelled out in section ninety-seven and we'll call it a round twenty six million galleons that you owe. That is all due immediately."

"But....but.." sputtered Lucius. He knew he was down to only one hundred thousand galleons in his vault. But he also knew he had over forty million galleons worth of dark magical items in his vault. He had moved them there from Malfoy Manor when the blood traitor Weasley had started his raids. He had spent most of his fortune in collecting the items, and knew in a future time he could sell them for a lot more than they were presently worth. Lucius looked at the smile on Gorplus's face. "I'll need to sell a few things from my vault before I can repay the loan."

"Your Vault was seized this morning to prevent you from withdrawing additional funds while you owed us money." Gorplus replied. "The hundred thousand galleons, of course were not enough to cover the loan." His smile deepened even more as he continued, "As for the other items in your vault, we determined since they were of Dark Magic they had no value and they were all immediately destroyed per our agreement with the Ministry of Magic."

Lucius' skin tone whitened even more. He knew the agreement that the Goblin was referring too. "All confiscated Dark Magical items were to be destroyed by the confiscating party with no reimbursement required." He, himself had bribed Fudge into getting it passed to help drive up the value of the Dark magical items he had purchased. Of course Lucius Malfoy never expected to have anything confiscated. He tried to swallow once, and then twice, his mouth was extremely dry as he looked at the goblin in front of him. He could feel the knob of his wand in his cane and wanted nothing more than to hex the smile off of the Goblin's face, but the hard points of the steel tipped spears were still touching his back. "It will take some time to raise that kind of money to reimburse the bank." Lucius finally said. He was thinking about the only thing he could do is sell Malfoy Manor. At the last tax appraisal it was worth thirty million galleons.

"Time?" Gorpus asked. Then he nodded down at the contract. "Where in this contract does it say you would have time to fulfill a loan in default? No, we will take what we can now and provide you with a single chance to contact an outside party to facilitate additional payments." He nodded at the third guard who was not currently holding Lucius at spear point. That Goblin grabbed Malfoy's cane and handed it to Gorplus.

"Nice ebony cane, silver inlaid." Gorplus said examining the cane carefully. He pulled on the knob at the end and Lucius' wand appeared. "Well we will give you credit of one hundred galleons for the cane and another ten for the wand." Gorplus examined the wand carefully before continuing. "Unfortunately, per our agreement with the Ministry we goblins are not allowed to own wands." He took the wand in two hands and while looking Lucius in the eyes he made a quick movement and snapped the wand into two pieces. He nodded again at the third security goblin. The goblin pulled the cloak from the shoulders of Lucius and handed it over to Gorpus. "Very elegant, but used. We'll credit you ten galleons for it."

"But that cloak cost two hundred galleons." Lucius cried out.

"The used clothes market is so poor right now." Gorpus said as he continued to smile. "Ten is the best I can do."

And so it continued until Lucius Malfoy was standing naked in Gorpus' office. "Now," Said the Goblin, "you can make that one contact to an outside agent."

"I'd like to call my wife please."

"Certainly." Gorpus said. "We don't have a public floo here in Gringotts, so my security guards will escort you to the Leaky Cauldron so you can make your call."

"What about clothes?"

"What about them?" Gorpus asked.

"I can't go out without any clothes." Lucius snarled.

"Oh, well if you don't want to make that call, that's fine." Gorplus replied. "I'll have the guards escort you to the nearest holding cell until your trial for fraud and theft is arranged."

"Fraud? Theft?" Lucius cried out. "I haven't done either of those things."

"You entered into a contract without the means to repay it." Gorplus said. "We at Gringotts consider that fraud and theft."

"Can't you use my home as collateral?" Lucius asked desperately. He just needed a little time and he was sure he could arrange some kind of payment. "I'll sign anything that will give me time to repay this loan."

"We can't do that." Gorplus said. "We looked carefully at the option to seize your Manor this morning at the same time we were securing your Vault, but we discovered the home is entirely in your wife's name. Normally you would have control over any property in her name, but it seems you specifically detailed it in the ownership paperwork that you decline the rights."

Lucius tried to swallow again. He had put his Ancestral home in Narcissa's name to save on his taxes. It had been another law he had bribed Fudge into passing.

"Your wife will have to come down here and sign over the Manor herself and after we have judged the value of it to be sufficient to cover your debt we shall let you leave." Gorplus replied and looked expectantly at Lucius.

"Well can you contact my wife and ask her to come down here?" Lucius asked.

"No, that would be up to you." The goblin said. "We are only willing to consider collateral from a third party for your debt. We are not required to assist you in actually obtaining it."

"So how do I contact her?"

"As I said earlier, you can be escorted to the Leaky Cauldron."

Malfoy thought about walking nude through the Diagon alley and shuddered at the humiliation. "What about an Owl? Can you provide me with the use of an Owl?"

"We do offer our customers that service, but.."

"Fine get me an Owl." Lucius said quickly.

"There is a service fee of five galleons for the use of one of our Owls." Gorplus replied.

"Add it to what I owe then."

"I'm sorry but we can't do that. That amount is in default and we cannot extend any more credit to you." Gorpus replied calmly, his smile still residing on his face.

Thirty minutes later Lucius Malfoy was walking up Diagon Alley toward the Leaky Cauldron wearing nothing but his birthday suit and a grimace. He was surrounded by his three Goblin guard who were giving plenty of room for people to view the blonde haired pompous wizard who was walking with two hands covering his privates. As they passed the offices of the Daily Prophet the sound of flashbulbs popping could be heard. His entry into the Leaky Cauldron stopped all conversations immediately as they stared at him. Lucius walked over to the fireplace, grabbed some powder, threw it in the fire, before he could say anything he felt three sets of goblin hands grab his legs and arms to prevent him from jumping into the fire and escaping. "Malfoy Manor." He said as he stuck his head into the green flames.

"Narcissa?"

"Lucius?" Narcissa replied. "Where are you and why don't you have clothes on? Have you been drinking again so early?"

"I'm at the Leaky Cauldron, but no I have not been drinking. Please I need you to listen. I ran into a little financial trouble with the Goblins. I need you to get the paperwork for the Manor and bring it to Gringotts. I need you to put it up for collateral on repaying their loan."

"Why can't you do it dear?"

"I put it entirely in your name Narcissa." Lucius replied. He had never told her he was doing it, since it was purely for tax purposes and she never wanted anything to do with the taxes.

"Oh, well why do we need to put it up for Collateral. We should have plenty of money in the vault to pay off the loan. After all it was only two hundred thousand wasn't it?" Narcissa said. "Though I never did understand why you even took out the loan to start with."

"We..uh...I used most of our money to make uh..some...uh purchases." Lucius said.

"How much did you spend Lucius?" Narcissa snarled at her Husband.

"Well...uh...thirty five million galleons."

"WHAT!" Narcissa's voice echoed throughout the Leaky Cauldron. "That should still leave us a couple of million, so what's the problem."

"I..well...I spent that too." Lucius said.

"How much do we have left then?"

"We had a hundred thousand galleons and all the stuff I bought which I could have sold for a profit."

"Well sell it!" Narcissa replied getting very testy.

"I...I can't. It's gone." Lucius replied.

"It's gone?"

"The Goblins confiscated our vault this morning and uh...uh...destroyed the things I bought."

"We can sue them then."

"No, uh...they did it legally."

"LUCIUS MALFOY!" Narcissa screamed. "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?"

"We'll talk about it later Cissy. Right now I need you to come down and sign the paperwork on the Manor. The Goblins are going to arrest me if you don't. They plan on charging me with Fraud and Theft."

"How much do you owe the Goblins Lucius?" Narcissa asked.

Everyone in the Leaky Cauldron was listening intently to every word being said in the fireplace. "We...uh...I owe them," Lucius's voice dropped to a whisper, "Twenty-six million Galleons."

"TWENTY-SIX MILLION!" Narcissa Screamed. "How did a two hundred thousand loan go to TWENTY-SIX MILLION?"

"There was some confusion on the interest amount." Lucius replied.

"Then our solicitor should be held responsible for not catching it, not you."

"I...I... didn't take it to a solicitor." Lucius admitted.

"YOU SIGNED A GOBLIN CONTRACT WITHOUT LEGAL HELP?" Narcissa screamed again. "HOW STUPID ARE YOU?"

The people who were in the Leaky Cauldron listening to the conversation all started laughing. Everyone knew that to enter a contract with the Goblins without having it reviewed by your own counsel was financial suicide.

"Time's up." One of the security guards said to Lucius as he pulled him from the fireplace.

As Lucius Malfoy was being marched back to the bank, his wife was sitting in her living room contemplating what she should do. It had come as a surprise to her that the home was entirely in her name. "Of course it's something Lucius would do without telling me." She thought. She strolled down the hallway to the music room. It's a room Lucius would never enter unless his life or a galleon was in danger. She took out her wand and tapped the third panel on the right and it slid open revealing Narcissa's private storage area.

Magically expanded to a very large area and currently holding her private funds. She had been squirreling away galleons here and there ever since the two of them were married. "Six million the last time I counted." She again thought to herself. "It's not enough to pay the Goblins so I guess we will have to sell the Manor." She thought of the last fifteen years she had been married to the man and wondered to herself if she wanted another hundred years with him. She finally made up her mind and with a sweep of her wand, the Galleons started piling into her bottomless and weightless bag. When the Galleons were all secured, she looked for and found the paperwork on the Manor and made her way to her private solicitor.

"What can I do for you today?" Solicitor Goodwin asked Narcissa.

"Take a look at these papers." And Narcissa passed over the documents on the Manor. "Is the Manor truly in my name alone?"

The Solicitor spent several minutes reviewing the parchments. He then called in a junior solicitor and had him run over to the Ministry for a quick review of the records. "Now while we are waiting for him to return, is there anything else I can do for you?"

"Can you see what Lucius' current financial state is?"

"Certainly." The solicitor sent another junior solicitor scurrying off to Gringotts. "Now anything else?"

"I'll let you know when I have those two questions answered."

It was only a half hour before both men had returned and given the information to solicitor Goodwin. "Malfoy Manor is entirely in your name. Interestingly enough the Goblins made a similar inquiry this morning." Goodwin looked at the other set of papers, "And Lucius is currently knutless with a claim of a little less than twenty six million galleons against him at Gringotts." The solicitor looked up at Mrs. Malfoy. "I'm sorry Narcissa, but with this information, unless you can pay me now, I can do no further business with you."

Narcissa reached into her bag and withdrew a hundred galleons and placed them on his desk. "Will this cover what you need?"

"It most certainly does. Now what else can we do for you this morning?"

"I would like to sell Malfoy Manor as quickly as possible and I would like to file for a divorce. I will relinquish all claims to our son if the divorce can be pushed through as quickly as possible."

"Well normally it would take time and your husband would need to agree with the divorce but if there were an appropriate..." He didn't finish the statement before Narcissa pushed another two thousand Galleons across the desk. "We can have you divorced within two days."

"Excellent Solicitor Goodwin."

In less than a week Narcissa Black was lying on a beach in the south of France drinking cocktails and looking out over the beautiful blue Mediterranean. Even at age thirty nine she was still an extremely attractive woman, especially now the look of something bad smelling under her nose had disappeared. It wasn't long before she was being hit upon by several strapping younger men. As she later was strolling back to her hotel room with one of those young men, she had a quick thought, "I wonder what happened to Lucius?" The thought quickly passed as the young man's hand found her rear and gave it a little squeeze.

When Lucius had been returned to Gorpus' office to await the arrival of Narcissa, the minutes had turned to hours until finally Gorpus spoke "Where is your wife Mr. Malfoy?"

"I...I don't know."

"I have too much other work to be doing." Gorpus replied as he nodded at one of the Guards. "Take Mr. Malfoy down to a holding cell."

"What? I'm sure she's just having trouble finding the paperwork. She'll be here any minute." cried Lucius.

"When she arrives, I'll send for you Mr. Malfoy."

Lucius tried to swallow again and realizing how thirsty he was he made a request. "Can...Can I get a drink of water and maybe something to eat?"

"Water is two knuts a cup, and food is one sickle. Since you have neither, I'm afraid I can't help you."

"But you're holding me prisoner. You're responsible for my well-being."

"We're only responsible once you're formally in our care Mr. Malfoy." Gorpus pulled out some parchment and a quill and quickly wrote several sentences. Looking back at Lucius he said, "This is a full confession admitting your guilt to thievery and fraud. Once you sign it, we can sentence you to your punishment and then you'll be in our care. As of now, you're only being detained while waiting for the arrival of your agent." He handed the parchment and quill over to Lucius who looked at it. "I'll never sign this. I'm not guilty of anything."

"Your choice Mr. Malfoy. Now if you'll excuse me." He nodded at the guards who dragged the blond haired wizard away.

Once Lucius was tossed into a holding cell he sat quietly waiting for his wife to appear. His thirst only got worse and worse as the day continued. There was no bathroom in the cell only an old chamberpot. He relieved himself sometime that afternoon, and again before he drifted off to sleep as he wondered why his wife hadn't shown up yet. By the next day the thirst was so bad he started drinking out of the Chamberpot instead of putting more liquids in it. Still he thirsted and still no wife showed up to save him. By the next day, Gorpus made a stop by the cell to find Lucius almost mad with thirst.

"You can sign the confession Mr. Malfoy and we will provide you water." He said. "Oh and your agent has made contact via a solicitor." He handed a note to Lucius. "It seems she has filed for divorce and is in the process of selling your Manor. Once it is sold of course it cannot be used for collateral."

"I'm sure she's selling it to get the money to have me freed." Lucius said around a swollen tongue.

"You can hope so." Gorpus announced. "But that does not explain the divorce does it?"

Lucius looked down at the note that Gorpus had given him. "Divorce?" He read the note from a solicitor Goodwin explaining that Narcissa was filing for a divorce, giving up all rights to any value in the marriage along with rights to their son. The divorce was being streamlined and should be completed sometime today.

"Looks like that divorce will happen very soon." Gorpus explained. He turned to leave before turning back. "Good luck and I'll check back on you in a few hours."

Lucius' confused mind thought over his situation. He had no home, no wife, a gay son, and was being held by Goblins. His wand had been snapped and he didn't have a stitch of clothing. "If I sign the confession, they'll sentence me to maybe four, five years and then when I get out I can have a new wife and still have my heir." He thought. When Gorpus arrived later that day, Lucius handed him the signed confession. "Water..please." He pleaded.

"Of course." Gorpus said and motioned for a couple of the guard to bring water and food. "Please deliver Mr. Malfoy to my office for his sentencing when he is fed and watered."

Twenty minutes later Lucius Malfoy was back in Gorpus' office dressed in an outfit that made house-elf clothing look fashionable.

"Now for your sentence Mr. Malfoy. It's very simple. We want our money. You will be sent to our branch office in Greenland where you will be digging new vaults by hand." Gorpus said. "You owe us twenty six million Galleons. We will credit you one million galleons for every ten years of service provided. That means you will spend the next two hundred and sixty years in our care. Good day Mr. Malfoy and have a wonderful life. Oh, I should warn you, if you decide to try to take your life, any and all medical expenses needed to restore you to health will be added to the amount you owe, thus extending your stay in the caves. When you become too old to work efficiently, we have several expensive potions which will be administered to bring you back to a more youthful life, but for every two years we have to increase your lifespan we will add one year to your sentence."

It was only after Lucius Malfoy was portkeyed away to Greenland that the realization of his sentence hit him. He sat down and cried.

The goblins docked him a day's pay which only added to his length of sentence.

Two hundred and ninety years later Lucius Malfoy was given an early release. His frequent injuries due to broken fingers (when Goblins say digging by hand they mean digging by hand) and age rejuvenation potions had brought his sentence up to four hundred and thirty years, but the Goblins were finally just tired of him. As the frail ancient wizard stepped out of the Branch office the sunlight he hadn't seen in all of the years he had been sentenced instantly blinded him. The goblins realizing the blinded elderly Human wizard would only be a nuisance outside of their bank so handed him a portkey which instantly transported him to the Greenland Ice Sheet. As Lucius stopped spinning and the cold started to creep into his elderly bones, he heard a sound other than the whistle of the frigid winds.

"GRRRRR"

The Polar Bear had an enjoyable snack after spending several minutes playing with his food.

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Over the next several days various articles ran in the Daily Prophet. The day after Lucius signed his confession and was sent to Greenland the front page showed a bare arsed Lucius Malfoy being escorted to the Leaky Cauldron. The headline read

Lucius Malfoy Guilty of Fraud and Theft.

The goblins of Gringotts convicted Lucius Malfoy of Fraud and Theft yesterday. His signed confession was formally submitted to the Ministry of Magic along with the declaration that the Goblins were fully within their rights to sentence the former Hogwarts Board of Governors member. We at the Daily Prophet have discovered that Lucius Malfoy will be released once he has earned enough money to repay the loan in its entirety. We were not able to determine how long that was expected to be. Lucius Malfoy is a Pillar of the Wizarding Community and the Daily Prophet wishes him a quick release from his imprisonment.

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Ragnok, Chief Goblin in charge of Gringotts slammed down the Daily Prophet after reading the article. "Daily Prophet makes it look like we didn't treat Mr. Malfoy fairly." He thought. "Hmm.... Griphook." He yelled.

"Yes sir?" The bank Teller responded as he rushed into Ragnok's office.

"I do believe the Editor of the Daily Prophet has been asking for a loan recently, hasn't he?"

"Yes sir, but we keep turning him down due to his inability to repay the loan."

"Excellent. If he asks again, please insure the loan is approved. No collateral needed, and make sure section forty-eight, subsection A, sub subsection eighteen is appropriately filled in." Ragnok said with a smile to his young employee.

"Yes sir. I will tend to it myself." Griphook replied and left the office.

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"CRUCIO...CRUCIO...CRUCIO" Voldemort screamed time after time. The subject of curse screamed much louder than his Master as each of the pain inducing unforgivable curses hit him. Voldmort was currently sitting in his playpen... er..Psychopathic Entity Lair. Normally Voldemort would be concerned that such prolonged torture by the Cruciatus Curse might cause long term brain damage, but he reasoned since Wormtail didn't seem to possess a brain, the chances of it happening were almost negligible. Pettigrew was currently being subjected to the extended torture because he had startled Nagini causing the snake to regurgitate the rabbit it had killed and eaten shortly beforehand. What made it extremely bad was the fact Nagini was sitting in Voldemort's lap being petted at the time the regurgitation happened. Dead rabbit bones and partially digested skin and other stuff had poured all over the most evil Villain to every walk the earth. This had in turn caused said vilest Villain to promptly piss in his diaper...er...Evil Villain waste capture device which pissed off the most evil Villain.

When Voldemort finally grew tired of watching Wormtail lurching around on the floor (later magical researchers in muggle customs came to believe the birth of Street Dancing in major cities occurred when someone witnessed a wizard being tortured by use of the Cruciatus Curse and thought it looked like fun.) he turned his attention to the Daily Prophet that Wormtail had acquired. It was the Daily Prophet striking the snake that had started the early snake startling incident. Fortunately for wormtail the paper itself was not spoiled by the regurgitation. As the evil wizard looked at the front page of the newspaper he saw one of his top Death Eaters walking naked down Diagon Alley he only had one thought. "Good help is so hard to find. How in the bloody hell can I take over the world with incompetent followers?" Voldemort pondered the problems he faced. "But then again most of my current followers were taught at a Dumbledore led Hogwarts, what else should I expect?"

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The last couple of weeks could have been much worse Draco Malfoy came to realize. He still might be friendless, but at least he wasn't under the death sentence....er..married to that Toad Woman. As he ate his breakfast the owls started delivering the morning mail. Draco picked up his copy of the Daily Prophet and opened it, his mouth dropped open as stared at the picture of his father on the front page in horror. He quickly dashed to his dorm where he wrote a letter to his mother asking for an explanation and sent his Eagle Owl off with it.

The next morning his eagle owl returned with his letter unopened. Magical Mail Delivery had stamped the envelope, "NO SUCH PERSON AS NARCISSA MALFOY EXISTS IN THE MAGICAL WORLD."

The answer to his confusion came when the Daily Prophet arrived shortly afterwards. Front page again had the picture of Lucius as he walked starkers up Diagon Alley but beside his picture was one of Narcissa putting suntan lotion on her scantily clad body as she sat on a beach chair. The picture showed her smiling and laughing as she was obviously enjoying herself.

Malfoys Divorce.

In a surprise announcement, Solicitor Goodwin of Goodwin, Badwin and Callevens announced that Narcissa Malfoy has filed a quick divorce from her husband of fifteen years Lucius Malfoy. As the Malfoys currently have no shared assets the divorce was handled in a record amount of time. Narcissa has taken her maiden name of Black and as you can see is currently dealing with her separation grief on a beach in southern France. Since the divorce preceded the conviction of Lucius Malfoy the status of their Son Draco is unknown. Mrs. Malfoy or now Ms. Black declined all rights to her young son and has left the country. Now with Mr. Malfoy having been sentenced by the Goblins, this reporter was unable to determine exactly who would have custody of their Son. If no legal guardian can be found he will become a ward of the Ministry. As a side note to this story, this reporter has discovered that Ms. Black sold Malfoy Manor to an unnamed bidder. According to rumors the price was much lower than expected. It is rumored that Ms. Black was more interested in selling it quickly rather than obtaining the best price.

Whispers from all around the Great Hall could be heard. As Draco looked around everyone seemed to be looking at him. He looked back down at the pictures of his parents and thought, "What happened?"

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Late in the afternoon of the same day a Gringott's Owl delivers a package to an overly large Black dog hiding with a Hippogriff in a cave outside of Hogsmeade. Once the Owl had departed the dog quickly morphed into a man. He ripped open the package and found a letter and long a few keys.

Mr. Black,

Your bid of fifteen million Galleons for Malfoy Manor was successful. Per your instructions a team of Goblins have been dispatched to modify the wards to accept you. The deed to the property will be held in your vault and not filed with the Ministry until such time as the Ministry sees fit in providing you with a trial.

Gricorc

Black Account Manager

Sirius Black's laughter could be heard almost all the way to Hogsmeade. He turned to BuckBeak. "Come on Bucky, we have a nice home to go to. What do you think, Malfoy Manor should be a great Wedding gift to Harry and Hermione when they finally get married don't you think? It will be the ultimate prank on old Lucius."

I had more planned for this chapter but the Lucius thing just got away from me. This story will be coming to an end in two or three more chapters. I am planning on two different endings to finish it.

As for what is going to happen to Draco, it's going to be his worst nightmare.

Narcissa Black had quickly become a Wizarding World celebrity. Every few days a different story appeared in the Daily Prophet and other newspapers and magazines around the world detailing her latest fashions, who she was dating and what time of night/morning that person was seen leaving her hotel room. She was traveling the world before deciding where to settle down and had already spent time in France, Italy, the Far East and Australia. There was even speculation on whether she would be featured in one of the upcoming Playwizard editions. Narcissa had discovered quickly that being single, beautiful and rich made for a much more fun lifestyle than being on the arm of a pompous arrogant pureblood bigot. As for blood status, Narcissa was discovering that non-magical men seem to be a lot more adept at the art of pleasuring her than their wizarding counterparts, especially when she slipped them pepper-up potion in their drinks. It seemed to have startling side effects for the wands of non-magical men. Later one of those men ran a blood analysis on himself and 'accidentally' made a discovery that would later turn into a brand new medication chemically known as Sildenafil Citrate.

Draco Malfoy was now only able to look at the paper when someone left a copy lying around. His subscription to the Prophet had run out and he found out that since his father's name had still been on his trust vault, it had been seized by the Goblins leaving him knutless and unable to even afford a newspaper.

Three weeks after his parents' divorce and his father's sentence, Draco was sitting at the Slytherin table all alone again. He kept looking left or right in hopes someone would put down a paper and leave it so he could follow the current stories of his mother. He was disgusted with her as she was constantly in the company of muggles and mudbloods and always with that damn smile on her face. He almost jumped out of his shoes when a hand was placed on his shoulder. Looking up he saw Professor McGonagall standing there.

"Mr. Malfoy, I need you follow me to the Headmaster's office." The Deputy Headmistress said.

Upon arrival in the Headmaster's office Draco and McGonagall waited for the Headmaster to look up.

Professor Dumbledore though was currently deep in thought. Severus had just given his weekly report concerning the Dark Mark

on his arm and how it was growing darker. Dumbledore didn't really need the update that often but the thought of Snape and tattoos always brightened the ancient Headmaster's day. Especially since the tattoo in question had serious symbolism in regards to the Headmaster's sexual orientation. He often wondered where else the Potion Master might have tattoos. "I wonder if he's considered getting a cute little phoenix right..."

"HMMMMMM."

Dumbledore looked up from his musing at the thought interrupting throat clearing. "It's that cat lady again. She always interrupts me when I least desire her to. Maybe if I get a dog she'll leave me alone.....hmm..Sirius?"

At that moment, at Malfoy Manor a cold chill ran down Sirius's back and an urgent desire to take a shower enveloped him. For some reason Sirius suddenly felt unclean.

"HMMMMMMM HMMMMMMM" McGonagall hummed again.

"Yes Minerva? Ah I see you have young Mr. Malfoy." Dumbledore turned his attention to the young man who had so little hair and no eyebrows. "Young man." Dumbledore turned up the twinkle in his eyes several degrees. "You're here today to identify where you will call home and who will care for you. There are several options open."

"My Father..." Draco began.

"Yes, your father is an excellent place to start; that is one option you have. The Goblins have offered for you to share his sentence. You can spend your time as he is doing to pay off his debt twice as fast." Dumbledore said. He looked down at a parchment on his desk. "You'd have to spend a minimum of one hundred and thirty years to halve the debt of your father." He looked up at Draco with an inquisitive look on his face. "Would you like to help your father like that?"

"One...One...HUNDRED YEARS!" Draco exclaimed.

"And thirty, yes that is what I said." The Headmaster said serenely.

"Uh no, I think I might prefer some other option." At that moment Draco realized the life he had known before coming to Hogwarts this past year was over. No father, no mother, no betrothed, no money and no home. As he contemplated what his life had become, Karma was about to kick him in the nuts one more time.

"Very well." Dumbledore looked again at the parchment. "Another option is to send you to live with either of your Aunts. Of course your Aunt Lestranger currently is living in Azkaban, but the warden there assures me that you can be placed in her cell and they would feed you as well." Again he looked up at Draco. "Would you prefer living with your Aunt Bellatrix?"

"In Azkaban?" Draco asked rhetorically. "I think not."

"Very well." Dumbledore crossed off a name on his list. "Your other Aunt is Mrs. Andromeda Tonks. She is somewhat reluctant to take you in since she was cast out of your Mother's house, but she is willing as long.."

"Stop there...I'm not going to live with ANY non pureblood family, much less that muggleborn loving bi...person." Draco said.

"You might want reconsider that statement as it will limit who can provide for you."

Draco whipped out his wand and said forcefully. "I Draco Malfoy swear on my life and magic that I will not ever willingly live with a non-pureblood family."

"Ah...that was an unfortunate thing to do I believe." Dumbledore said. He looked back down at the parchment and started crossing off names. "Severus had volunteered, but since Professor Snape is a half blood, he is out." Dumbledore continued crossing off names until only one was left. "There is only one pureblood family left who is willing to take you in, but before I mention them I will give you the other options. Normally you could be placed in a wizarding orphanage, but your father recently voted a series of budget cuts to the facility and they are unable to take any more orphans in at this moment. "

"Forget all other options Headmaster." Draco sneered. "Just tell me who this pureblood family is that I will be living with. The

Greengrasses? The Knotts? The Crabbe's are very good friends of my father, it's them isn't it?"

"Um no. It seems the majority of the Pureblood families lost interest as soon as they learned you do not have any money. They are also concerned that the contract your father signed might have a clause about seizing assets from heirs as well. They are afraid that their own property might be seized if they were to take you in." Dumbledore started to get up from his chair. "I'll notify your new family of your decision this instant."

Draco had a sudden sinking feeling in his stomach. He watched the Headmaster walk over to the fireplace and after tossing in some floo powder, he said a word Draco didn't catch and green flames flared up.

"He's agreed to your family."

A female voice Draco had heard twice in his life ranged out of the fireplace. "Excellent. I'll be over shortly." Draco felt cold sweat pour down his back as he remembered the two times he had heard the voice before. The first was when a Howler exploded in his second year and shouted at Ronald Weasley and most recent was when a stumpy red headed woman was chasing a dragon yelling 'Ronniken'. Just then the fire blazed green and Molly Weasley stepped out of the fireplace.

"Goodness. I always say that you can never have enough children." Molly said as she sized up the young man in front of her.

"You can say that again." McGonagall muttered under her breath.

"We'll need to get him into shape of course." Mrs. Weasley said. "But I'm sure after a summer of degnoming the garden, cleaning the house and feeding the chickens, he'll be fine."

"There is no way I'm going to live with this Mudblood loving....mgfmgh." Draco's voice became garbled as soap suds started pouring out of his mouth.

Molly put her wand away and said. "Now they'll be no more of that foul language. I've raised seven children and know how to deal with them. Now nod if you understand."

Draco's face turned red as he continued to sputter against the suds that continually replenished in his mouth. Molly waved her wand again and the soap started tasting more and more sour. Until finally with tears running down his face Draco nodded.

"Fine." Molly Weasley said and after a wave of her wand Draco mouth was cleared of soap.

"I am NOT.." Draco started but stopped when Mrs. Weasley's wand rose again. "uh....is there any other options."

"Unfortunately with the magical oath you made earlier, there is not."

"What about Aunt Bellatrix? She's a pureblood and....and.... Azkaban can't be that bad." Draco cried out as he thought of a whole summer of sitting next to and watching Ron Weasley eat and actually having to do manual labor.

"Well that is still an option I suppose." Dumbledore said.

"Yes, please. I'll go live with Aunt Bellatrix."

"Very well." Dumbledore said and turned to the Weasley Matriarch. "Thank you for wanting to help but I'm afraid young Mr. Malfoy wishes to go a different route."

"Our house will always be open Albus if he changes his mind." Molly replied and disappeared into the emerald flames back to the Burrow.

"I'll let the Warden know to expect you next week then." Dumbledore said to Draco.

"NEXT WEEK?" Malfoy shouted. "I thought it would be the end of the year."

"I'm sorry, but your father always insisted on paying your tuition on a monthly basis out of your trust vault. Unfortunately the last time we tried to collect the due tuition the Goblins informed us the vault was now empty."

"But...but...but..." Draco stammered.

Dumbledore felt heartwarming compassion for the young man in front of him. "I'll let you stay until a week after the Easter Holidays which gives you two more weeks here."

Draco later was lying on his bed in his dorm and suddenly a thought hit him. "I can sell my broom. I should get enough money from a Nimbus 2001 to last at least another semester and maybe even a whole year. With a little time I can rebuild my life." With his hopes higher than they had been all day he hopped off his bed and opened his trunk and at that time he remembered he had left his broom at Malfoy Manor because his father had told him about the Tri-Wizard tournament and that there would be no Quidditch this year.

As he collapsed back on his bed, his only thoughts were "It's that damn Potter and his mudblood whore's fault. I'll make them pay before I go."

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Sirius was happier than he had been in a long time. Malfoy Manor and the surrounding estate were huge. He had purchased the house with all assets still in place. So he didn't have to worry about furnishing it. He had been exploring since he moved in. The previous day he had opened a closet of what was obviously Draco's room only to find a Nimbus 2001 tucked away. "He must have known about the Tri-Wizard tournament early so didn't bother taking the broom with him to school. Excellent." It wasn't long before Sirius was flying around over the grounds.

Later he realized he was going to need a house-elf to help him take care of the place. He remembered Kreacher the elf from his childhood and didn't want to deal with him.

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Millicent Bulstrode had been planning for Easter break ever since the letter from her father about the bride price. The week was supposed to have been her wedding and honeymoon, but now she had other plans. She knew that Draco never wanted her, but she had been the last choice his father had at the time. She was tired of being at the end of the jokes around school. She was tired of being compared to a Hag. She was determined for that to change.

Upon leaving Hogwarts for the week she checked into a Magical medical procedure clinic that specialized in entire body makeovers. She had been in Owl contact with them for weeks scheduling out the procedures they recommended. As soon as she got there, she was immediately scheduled for a bone structure reduction procedure. It was based loosely off of what had happened to Harry Potter during the second year. Limb by limb the bones were banished and a modified skelegrow solution was administered that grew back the bones in a controlled smaller frame. Skin and muscles were reduced to match the new structure as well. By the time it was over, she was a couple of stones lighter and several inches smaller. With her smaller framed body, her breasts now displayed prominently. Overall her body was definitely more feminine. She also had several procedures equivalent to muggle plastic surgery that softened her facial features and jawline. Her hair, teeth and skin underwent several refinement processes and finally a slight magical adjustment to her voice made the pitch higher for a more feminine sounding voice. During the week she spent almost every Galleon paid by the Malfoys and had experienced pain like she had never known before, but as she looked in the mirror the night before it was time to return to Hogwarts, she realized it was worth every knut and every agonizing painful second. She knew she'd never be of Veela beauty, but she didn't want that anyway. She only wanted boys to look at her without feeling they needed to insult her or compare her to some monster. She wanted to not be the last choice and as she looked in the mirror she felt she was who she wanted to be. Her mother and father had first objected to her wanting to change so dramatically, but had finally relented when they saw how desperately she wanted to not be the person who had been engaged to Draco Malfoy only because no one else would have him. As their gift to their daughter, they bought her a whole new wardrobe.

The next day as Millicent Bulstrode walked into the Great Hall of Hogwarts several boys' eyes followed her wondering who the cute new witch wearing Slytherin robes was. A smile crossed her face as she noticed the attention. She first made her way to the head table where she identified herself and then she walked over to the Gryffindor table where she had a quick word with Harry Potter and Hermione Granger. Several people wondered why Harry's fork dropped out of his hand as the witch said something to them. After a quick conversation with the two of them and a nod to the Weasley twins. She walked over and sat down across from Draco. Malfoy was stunned to see someone sit near him. Nobody has done that in

months. Though the witch across from him looked very familiar he couldn't place who it was.

"Hello Draco." Millicent said.

"Do I know you?" He answered.

"You could say that."

"You look familiar, but I don't remember you. I'm sure I would have remembered someone as attractive as you." He said hoping the compliment might help.

"Good. Those were the exact words I hoped to hear." Millicent replied and stood back up. "Oh and Draco, today would have been the day we returned from our honeymoon."

Draco eyes widened under his non-existent eyebrows. "Mil...Millicent? But...but....but." Was all he could sputter.

She just turned and smiled at him and then walked away.

Over the next few years at Hogwarts, Millicent enjoyed her new found self esteem. She refused to date anyone who had insulted her. In wanting a little revenge, she actually fell into the company of the Weasley Twins and helped them with their pranks especially against the people who used to mock her and now tried to court her. A friendship developed and she became a regular in the Gryffindor common room. Through the twins she became friends with Ginny and Neville also. She still had some friends in the Slytherins as well. As the other females in the Slytherins saw how gentlemanly the Gryffindors acted toward Millicent compared to the male slime that frequented the dungeons, Pansy, Daphne, Astoria and Tracey all became more interested in the other houses for company. With the ever present Narcissa Black in the news, the witches of the wizarding world and especially Hogwarts followed her example and blood status fell by the wayside.

When the twins eventually opened their joke shop, Millicent became their first employee. Through them she met their older brother Charlie and the two of them hit it off instantly. They owed each other frequently and Millicent visited the Dragon reserve often to see the handsome Dragon Handler. On Millicent's twenty-third birthday

Charlie proposed to her and Millicent Bulstrode knew she was not his last choice.

%%%%%%%%%

The days were passing quickly for the school year. Harry was enjoying spending time with Hermione. His grades were skyrocketing as Hermione reward system along with not having Ron constantly complaining about doing homework seemed to do wonders for helping him complete his work. Amazingly enough he discovered by having a much more firm understanding of the subjects, he was spending less time overall doing the homework as the weeks moved on. Shortly before Easter he received an owl from Sirius.

Hey Pup,

Just to let you know I am in a much safer place now. I don't know if you heard that Malfoy Manor was up for sale, but it was and my bid was accepted by my cousin Narcissa. I am living here now and the wards are outstanding. There is no chance of me being discovered. This place is phenomenal. It has so many rooms I'm afraid I'm going to get lost. It's got a nice pool to swim in and it even has a small pitch to practice Quidditch. I've already been out flying and Buckbeak even joins me sometimes. Of course you and Hermione are welcome to come spend the entire summer here. She can even bring her parents since there is plenty of room for them. If you happen to know of a house-elf who wants to work for me please send them my way. Oh if you want a good laugh, you should ask Draco where his broom is. He seems to have left it here and since everything in the house at the time of purchase is now mine.....well what do you think I've been flying for the last couple of days. I hope you let me have a go on your Firebolt over the summer but this Nimbus 2001 isn't half bad.

Snuffles.

Harry and Hermione loved the idea of spending the summer with Sirius and Hermione started thinking of ways to convince her parents to let her stay there as well. They both immediately thought of the perfect House-elf for Sirius.

"Dobby."

Immediately the small house-elf appeared next to them. "How can Dobby help Harry Potter sir."

"Dobby, is there some place we can talk in private where no one can overhear us?" Hermione asked.

"We can go to the come and go room." Dobby answered.

"What's the come and go room? I've never heard of it and it's not mention in Hogwarts, A History."

"It's a special room that will become whatever you want it to become. Follow Dobby and Dobby will show you. We need to go to the seventh floor near a tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy."

"Is that the ugly thing with trolls dressed in Ballet outfits."

"That's the one Miss Grangy."

Several minutes later they were standing in front of a blank wall across from the tapestry. "Now yous need to walk in front of this wall three times wishing for exactly what yous want and the room will appear."

Harry wondered if the small elf was trying to prank them but did what he said. Walking back and forth three times while saying quietly. "I need a room to talk to Dobby in private, I need a room to talk to Dobby in private....." On the third pass a door appeared. When they entered the door they found themselves in a small room with nothing but a chair and a couch.

When he and Hermione were seated on the couch and had insisted that Dobby sit in a chair which caused him to immediately start crying out being treated as an equal by the great Harry Potter, they started telling Dobby what they wanted.

"Dobby, did you know your old Master's house was sold?" Harry asked.

"Dobby heard something about it."

"Well we know who bought it and they are interested in hiring a house elf to help take care of it." Hermione said. "Would you be interested in the job?"

"It's now owned by my Godfather Dobby." Harry added. "He's a good man."

"You want Dobby to work for your Godfather?" Dobby asked with tears coming to his eyes. "Dobby would be honored." The little elf looked down for a few seconds and then looked at Harry and Hermione nervously, "Would your godfather need a second elf? Winky isn't doing so good."

"I'm sure Si..the new owner won't mind. In fact it would probably keep him from being too lonely in the Manor." Harry said.

"Can we go see your godfather now?" Dobby asked. "Dobby is eager to get started."

"We don't have a way to get there." Harry said. "The Hogwarts express won't leave until tomorrow. I guess we can go then if you want."

"Dobby can take you." Dobby replied. "Hold my hand." He reached out and taking Harry and Hermione's hand and a second later and they were standing on the grounds of Malfoy Manor. "Harry Potter will introduce me to his godfather now."

"How...how did you do that?" Hermione asked. "You can't apparate from Hogwarts. It says so in Hogwarts a History."

"Wizards and Witches can't." Dobby replied. "But house-elves can. They don't use the same magic."

"PUP?" Sirius Black's voice cried out. "Where'd you drop in from?"

"Caught a ride from a friend Sirius." Harry said.

In the end both Dobby and Winky went to work at the old Malfoy Manor and Harry and Hermione got to spend most of Easter week spending time with Sirius. In the middle of the week, Harry and Hermione were sitting under a tree on the estates in the late afternoon. Hermione was reading a book while Harry was lying on

the grass beside her, watching her. He pondered the last year, how much better it had been since Hermione had become his girlfriend. Suddenly he had a thought of how to make her happier, or at least he thought she would be happier.

"Be right back." He said to his girlfriend and quickly strolled away leaving her wondering where he was going. He got out of her sight and quickly called Dobby and asked if he could do something. When the little elf replied in the affirmative, the two of them returned to Hermione.

"Come on." Harry said to her. "We have somewhere to go." He gestured for her to grab Dobby's hand.

Hermione looked at him inquisitively, and then thinking he wanted to go back to Hogwarts, she took the elf's hand. With a crack the two of them were standing in a secluded area in the back garden of a well to do suburban home. Hermione's eyes widened as she realized she was in her own backyard. She turned and looked at her boyfriend. "Harry?"

"You spent the last several days with my family; I thought you'd like to spend a couple with your parents." He replied. He turned to Dobby. "Wait here Dobby so we can prepare her parents."

"Dobby will do what Harry Potter says."

Hermione was already pulling Harry toward the backdoor. Finding it locked, she quickly found a rock in the garden beside the door. Picking it up, she slid aside a plastic door on the bottom and a key fell out. She quickly unlocked the door and walked in. "MUM! DAD!"

Harry recognized her mother and father of course. He had met them before the second year at Diagon Alley but as the two old Grangers came hurrying into the kitchen at what appeared to be their daughter's voice, he realized he hadn't thought this through very well. He had typically just walked into the lion's den without even thinking about it. He was meeting the parents of not Hermione Granger his best friend, but of Hermione Granger, his girlfriend. Harry swallowed hard as his pulse raced and cold sweat broke out all over his body. As he looked at Hermione's parents, he realized he hadn't remembered just how large Mr. Granger was until that moment. In the current situation the man looked three times larger than normal

and four times scarier. He remembered the owls the Grangers and he had swapped at Christmas time concerning Hermione's present had been pleasant, but this was different. This time he was easily within being killed distance. He quickly had a laugh to himself thinking that at least Ginny's father was a lot less imposing. Then again Hermione when angered could be very very scary as well and she had to have gotten it from somewhere. He steadied his nerves and made sure he kept eye contact with the two of them.

"Mum...Dad, you remember Harry don't you." Hermione said.

"Of course dear. Hello Harry I'm Jean, Jean Granger."

"And I'm Richard." Mr. Granger said and held out his hand. As with all fathers who are introduced to his girl's boyfriend, he measured the boy from head to foot. Looking for any flaw that might suggest the boy is unworthy of his girl's affections. As Harry shook his hand Richard made sure the handshake was firm enough to quietly emphasize a silent "you hurt my daughter and I'll hurt you" message.

"Mrs. Granger, Mr. Granger. Nice to meet you." Harry said as he nodded at each one. "Uh...thanks for the help at Christmas."

"Oh, of course you're welcome Harry, but none of the Mr and Mrs. Its Jean and Richard please," Hermione mother turned a wry grin to her daughter, "Or should he go ahead and call us Mum and Dad?"

"MUM!" Hermione blushed but smiled as she thought of their Christmas time conversation.

"Well it isn't like we don't know him. Your letters for the last three years have been mostly about this young man." This caused their daughter to blush even more. "We were surprised though, when that beautiful Owl of Harry's delivered a message about a Christmas gift and the Yule Ball and he wanted to get something special for his girlfriend."

As Hermione continued to blush, Harry put his arm around her waist. "Its fine Mione. I promise I'm alright with it. I love you."

Both of the older Grangers' eyebrows shot up and they looked at each other at the mention of the L word. Not the word itself, but the look in his eyes as he said it and the sincerity of the words spoken.

When Hermione turned and wrapped her arms around Harry for comfort, they realized this was definitely more than a school time crush. All teasing aside, they both had the feeling that in a few years this young man would be calling them Mum and Dad.

"I'll stop teasing now. How did you two get here? Did you take that Bus thingy you said Harry took that time."

"That's the Knight Bus Mum, no we had a better way. In fact he is waiting in the back garden." Hermione opened the door again and called "Dobby."

The little elf came bustling into the kitchen and stopped when he saw the Grangers. Hermione made the introductions. "Mum Dad, this is Dobby and he is a house-elf."

The Grangers were at first shocked at the sight of the little elf. Hermione had mentioned them in several letters, including a long rant from earlier in the year about elf slavery. They both decided they didn't know enough about the topic to delve into it until their daughter brought it up. "Hello Dobby." Jean said.

"Dobby is happy to meet the parents of Harry Potter's Miss Grangy." Dobby replied.

Mrs. Granger looked quizzically at her daughter who gave a little smile. "Well have a seat and make yourself comfortable Dobby." The little elf immediately started murmuring "Treats Dobby as an equal. Great Harry Potter's Grangy's family...." The rest became garbled as tears came to Dobby's eyes.

"You're our friend Dobby." Harry said. "Of course you're an equal."

After a while Dobby apparated back to Malfoy Manor after assuring Harry he would hear when he called for the trip back. The spent the next couple of hours getting to know one another, but it was a little later when Mr. Granger invited Harry into the study by himself that Harry started getting nervous again.

Richard settled into a leather recliner after pouring himself a glass of Scotch Whiskey and studied the young man who was sitting nervously on the edge of the other chair. "I presume you know why you're in here Harry?"

"Uh.. I think so sir." Harry replied nervously. "Hermione?"

"Correct. She's my only child and my life." Richard started as his eyes continued to study the young man. "This past summer I sent my young girl off to school again and now a young lady that looks exactly like her brings a young man home." Richard took a sip of his whiskey before continuing. "Earlier when she needed comforting, she turned to you. Yes, her mother and I were teasing her, but it was still you she turned to."

"But sir.." Harry started before Richard continued.

"Don't take that wrong Harry, it's a natural thing. I won't say it doesn't hurt, and I wouldn't have minded if she had waited until she was thirty before a man showed up in her life, but here you are." Harry still felt the gaze upon him. "Now the question that all fathers must ask, what are your intentions concerning my daughter?"

At that question Harry stopped being nervous and he looked Hermione's father in the eye and said, "Sir, your daughter is everything to me. She is my best friend and the person I love. When it comes to her, my intentions are simple; I want to do whatever I can to make her happy for as long as she will let me. When she isn't happy, it feels like a piece of my heart is missing."

Richard had to fight the urge to blink. The maturity of the answer the young man had just given him spoke volumes of his character. He took another sip of his whiskey. "From the look in my daughter's eyes, I can see she thinks the world of you."

"Then it's both ways sir." Harry replied.

"You know if you hurt her, I'll have to find you don't you?" Richard asked. "It's a father's job."

"Sir, if I were to hurt your daughter, I'll find you so you can beat sense back into me because I would have obviously lost it."

Even Richard couldn't keep a straight face with that answer. He nodded to Harry, and then motioned the young man over to a drawer. When he opened it Harry saw all kinds of strange looking hooks and picks and funny looking things. "Know what these are?"

and he looked surprise when Harry shook his head. "Never seen what a Dentist uses when he take care of your teeth?"

Harry remembered that both of Hermione's parents were dentist. "Sorry sir, I've...uh..never been to the dentist."

"Well I was going to say that it was too bad I wasn't going to get to threaten to use these on you if you hurt Hermione. I mean I did arrange this drawer specifically for threatening possible suitors, but I think maybe I better. You've never been to the dentist? Hermione explained that you lost your parents when you were young, but you're living with relatives right?"

"Yes sir." Harry replied but said nothing more.

Richard Granger had met a lot of young men as a dentist. He recognized the look of someone who didn't want to speak about something and the tone the young man had used said volumes, but he let it drop for now. He did know it would be something he had to explore carefully at a later time with his daughter. He knew that if Harry was being raised in an abusive atmosphere, statistically he was more likely to be abusive toward loved ones himself. Richard refused to judge the young man based purely on statistics but he intended to explore the topic with Hermione and get to know this young man as much as possible to fully understand him.

"I would like to give you a full examine sometime then Harry." Richard said and noticed the look on Harry's face as he glanced down at the drawer filled with sharp dental instruments. "I promise that Hermione can be in the room to make sure I am not torturing you, though if you've never been to a Dentist before, you just might think that is exactly what Jean and I are doing."

Harry glanced again into the drawer before answering as calmly as he could, "Uh..that's fine sir."

"Now I have one last question before we rejoin the ladies. I am considering inviting you to spend the evening here. If I do that, can I trust you? I mean when it comes to my daughter and her bedroom."

"Yes sir, uh...I mean I'd never sir. We...uh...I..." He decided to shut up then and just nod.

The nervousness of the answer was more than enough for Richard and Harry was invited to stay the night. In fact he and Hermione spent the next two nights there before returning to Malfoy Manor and Sirius. Richard and Jean took Harry to their office for a thorough checkup and cleaning, and found for someone who had never been to the dentist his teeth were in relatively good shape. They still insisted on a full set of X-rays and a good cleaning. Upon leaving their office, Harry was positive that the drill they used had a small dementor inside of it for the fear just the sound of it seemed to cause.

Harry had Dobby bring over a bottle of Fire Whiskey from Malfoy Manor. It seemed like Lucius must have just taken a new shipment before he was sentenced by the Goblins. Richard Granger's first sip of the beverage proved to be hilarious as he stumbled backward when he belched up a mouthful of flames. But when he recovered he had a good laugh.

As Harry and Hermione held the house-elf's hands and disappeared. Jean turned to her husband. "Well?"

"A fine young man I have to admit. Though I am a little concerned about his life at his home."

"I agree. But I don't think he's been affected by it. Do you see the way he looks at Hermione?"

"Unfortunately yes." Richard growled. "No boy should be in love with my daughter until she is at least twenty five."

"I don't remember you waiting until I was twenty-five."

He couldn't argue with his wife's logic so he went back to his study and had another glass of the firewhiskey and thought of the little girl who wore frilly dresses and he used to read fairy tales to. Now it seems that same little girl was living a fairy tale and had found her Prince Charming.

%%%%%%%%%

Harry and Hermione were seated back at the Gryffindor table on the last night of Easter Break when a strange new witch in Slytherin robes came over to talk to them.

"Harry, Hermione." She started softly. "It's me Millicent Bulstrode." And at that statement the fork in Harry's hand fell to his plate as he studied the young witch. She definitely had the same eyes, and some of the features but all Harry could wonder was how could such a change take place.

"I just wanted to say I'll be sitting with Draco for a very," She emphasized the word very, "short time. If you could let the twins know it's not for a good thing." She gave a curt nod to the Twins sitting further down the table who had no clue who the young witch was.

"Uh..yeah..sure..Millicent."

"Oh and tell them thank you. I owe everything to them and something tells me that I owe you two as well."

"Good Luck Millicent."

She flashed them a smile and left as she walked toward the Slytherin table.

Hermione looked at Harry, "Well we did say it was going to be interesting in Slytherin house didn't we."

%%%%%%%%%

Barty Crouch Jr was still drinking heavily. The run-up to the second task had been extremely stressful and the alcohol he had consumed during that time had led to a firewhiskey addiction. Not only was he still adding the potent alcoholic drink to his polyjuice potion (he had discovered it did in fact help keep a good buzz going during the entire hour) but he couldn't go to sleep anymore without it being a result of passing out from consumption. He had a calendar on his desk with the day after the third task circled in red. The day after he got Harry Potter into his Master's grasp, he was going to kill that Red-Headed sorry excuse for a human being. He was still contemplating ways for it to be done. The killing curse was much too painless for this situation. He had an idea of locking him in a dungeon cell filled with slow acting poison filled food. He would even tell the idiot the poison was in the food and then just let him try not to eat the food surrounding him. Barty had recently found out that

Weasley's biggest fear was spiders, so his current favorite method was to put the him in a slowly degrading protective bubble in the middle of the Acromantula colony. The bogus Defense teacher wondered if the Acromantulas would kill him before he died from excessive crapping on himself. Either way it would be an enjoyable way to pass a few hours. Crouch pulled down another bottle of Fire Whiskey and started his nightly routine of preparing for sleep.

%%%%%%%%%

Voldemort was getting cranky. He had now spent well over a year in the company of Wormtail and the Dark Lord thingy was getting an itchy wand finger. If that wasn't bad enough he'd developed a rash on his bottom and Wormtail still hadn't figured out how to warm his hands.

"Wormtail." The dark infant screamed. "What is today's date?"

"April something. My Lord." Pettigrew replied.

"I told you to always have the exact date. CRUCIO!"

"AAAARRRRRRGGGGHHHHHH...."

As part of his brilliant evil mind kept the hatred pouring into the curse on this faithful servant, another part of it concluded that it must be April 18th. "Eighteen minutes of torture then." He only last another six minutes before he started getting a headache from his loyal subject's screaming and had to silence Wormtail and then start the Cruciatus Curse all over again. As Wormtail silently screamed below his high chair – err Height adjustable Evil Villain Chamber of Nourishment, he silently counted how many days before Harry Potter's lifeless eyes looked up at him. "Sixty-seven days." A wicked grin broke over his face, but it was quickly gone as he felt a discomfort build up inside of himself. "WORMTAIL! You're useless. You can't even burp me well."

%%%%%%%%%

Ron Weasley was sitting in the Great Hall during Easter break shoveling his fifth plate of eggs and bacon into his mouth when an overly large gray owl landed next to him with a letter and a large package. When Ron went to grab the letter the Owl bit him.

"Ow...you bloody owl." He yelled. The owl then held out his leg and offered the letter. Just as Ron had it unfastened the owl took another nip of Ron's finger. As he sucked the blood from his finger he read the note.

Ron,

The owl who delivered this is our new family owl. His name is Regnad. Your father was able to buy him for a very low price due to the Owl's tendency to bite the person receiving the letter. In the accompanying package are the Easter Eggs for you, Harry, Hermione and Ginny. Make sure everyone gets theirs.

Mum

Three more bloodied fingers later the box was loose from the owl's leg and just as Regnad was to fly away, he leaned over and bit Ron on the ear as well. Ron opened the box and saw the four eggs inside. Each was the size of a Dragon Egg. He looked around the table. Harry and Hermione weren't there and Ginny was too engrossed in a conversation with Neville.

"What they don't know about, they'll never miss." He thought and started eating all the eggs.

%%%%%%%%%

Harry and Hermione benefited almost immediately from Millicent Bulstrode's new friendliness. She warned them that Draco Malfoy was planning on attacking them sometime before he would be forced to leave the school at the end of the week. Harry was continually carrying the Marauder's Map with him checking on where the Blond haired...uh...sort of blackish Blond haired snake was located. They always arrived at any class they had with him early to make sure they could always sit in the back preventing Malfoy from being behind them.

The day before the end of the week, Harry and Hermione left dinner a little early when the map showed Malfoy had positioned himself in an alcove on the fourth floor directly in the normal path back to Gryffindor Tower. They knew he planned to attack now. They quickly came up with a plan.

They decided to do the same thing they had originally done to Daphne and Tracy, except this time Harry would be the one under the cloak. As they got to the top of the fourth floor staircase, they looked back at the steps and cast three charms, "Glisseo." Hermione whispered and the steps flattened into a chute, "Aquamenti." Harry murmured and water shot out of his wand and coated the staircase and at the same time Hermione whispered, "Glacius." And the water turned to ice. The steps they had just walked up was now an ice covered chute.

Harry ducked under the Invisibility cloak and moved closer to the Alcove the ferret was hiding. Hermione started humming to herself and walked past the Alcove. As they had predicted would happen Draco stepped out behind her and after a quick look to make sure she was alone, "Well if it isn't Potter's Mudblood?"

Hermione smiled to herself and turned to face him. "What do you want Ferret?" She asked.

Draco sneered, though when a mostly hairless deformed eared person with no eyebrows sneers at you, it's more laughable than anything else, "You two destroyed my life. I don't know how but you did. I wanted both of you, but I'll take care of you now and then go find Potter." He raised his wand, but Hermione just pointed a finger at him and "EXPELLIARMUS!" and like the time with Daphne and Tracy, Draco's wand flew out of his hand when Harry quietly summoned it.

"WHAT! That's impossible!"

Hermione smiled then her eyes narrowed as she stared at Draco. "You're not telling me a MUDBLOOD is better than you are you Malfoy. You mean you can't do wandless magic? Let's see what a wandless stinging Hex does." As she raised her finger again, the cowardly ferret took off running, right toward the down staircase. Harry cast one last spell removing the Ferret's clothes and Draco ended up sliding naked face first down a chute of ice. The stairs took that moment to switch and he slid off the side and plummeted 3 stories. He might have been seriously injured if Severus Snape hadn't been walking in that spot at the time and ended up with Draco Malfoy landing on top of him again. Several other students exiting

the Great Hall found a naked Draco lying on top of the Potions Professor. Peeves was also there.

Three stories above, Harry and Hermione were canceling the charms on the staircases and tossing Draco's wand down the steps before exiting as fast as they could.

"Snape and Malfoy lying in a hall....B-U-G.." Peeves started before the Deputy Headmistress found them.

"SEVERUS SNAPE!" Minerva McGonagall shouted at seeing a naked student and Snape lying there.

Snape had been walking quietly from the Great Hall headed for his office when he heard screaming coming from above him. He had just enough time to look up and see a very naked Draco Malfoy descending rapidly. The next thing the Potions Master remembered was regaining consciousness with Minerva McGonagall screaming at him. In his befuddled condition he said the exact wrong thing again. "OH JUST BUGGER ME!" It was only then did he realize that Draco was still lying on top of him. "I have really got to get that statement out of my Vocabulary." He thought.

"Snape and Malfoy lying in a ha..." Peeves tried to start again.

"Stop that despicable behavior this instant." The deputy Headmaster said sharply cutting off the Poltergeist one more time.

"What may I ask is going on here?" Albus Dumbledore asked as he strolled up.

"It seems Severus and young Malfoy were about to be engaged in further sexual activities Headmaster." McGonagall replied. "I demand you take serious action this time Albus."

"Severus..Severus." The Headmaster said softly to his pet Death Eater. "I have no choice this time you know. I must do what I must do."

"You don't mean...." The greasy haired potion master started. "But.."

"I'm sorry Severus." The Headmaster took a deep breath before continuing with the unpleasant task. "I must discipline you this time Severus. I hate to do this, but for the next week you're not allowed to have apple pie with your meals. Is that understood. Minerva, you're to inform the elves."

Snape bowed his head and smirked. "Yes Headmaster."

"But...but.." McGonagall sputtered. "He was going to have sex with a student."

"And I have punished him for it."

"But he doesn't even like apple pie." The deputy Headmistress exclaimed.

"Then the punishment will not be a problem being carried out. Good night all." Dumbledore turned and started for his office leaving behind looks ranging from bewilderment to amusement to absolute disgust. "It was a bit harsh, but Severus must learn to control those urges." He thought to himself.

Draco's exit from the castle was a subdued affair. No student could see the ferret without thoughts of him and Professor Snape flooding their minds and causing a round of vacated meals. Before he left Millicent snuck into his dorm and stocked his trunk with Canary Creams, Horntail Honeys and Ducky Delights courtesy of the twins.

Several hours later Malfoy found himself on a small boat crossing the North Sea. A short time later he was put into his Aunt's cell.

"Bella. We have your new roomy for you. Your nephew is here to share your cell." The warden said as he open the cell and allowed Draco and his trunk inside. Draco of course had to surrender his wand before coming to the Prison.

Bellatrix regarded her nephew with a look of disgust. "So you're dear old Narcissa's boy?"

"Yeah." Draco murmured not liking the deranged look in his Aunt's eyes.

"Well what do you have in your trunk." She asked.

"Clothes and things."

"Open it up." She demanded.

When he opened it, she saw the Canary Cremes first and yelled. "CANDY!" grabbing several of them she quickly shoveled them into her mouth. Several seconds later she was a deranged tall yellow Canary and she didn't like being a Canary. Unfortunately for Draco, there was no place to run and he was pecked constantly for the next ten minutes until she molted and turned back into a person. Unfortunately the twins still hadn't worked out that molting problem and Draco was looking at his naked aunt who had spent the last thirteen years with no exercise and very little food not to mention no bra. What he saw was a extremely can see ribs through the skin thin, untuned body with breasts hanging down to her waist. He rushed to the window and threw up.

Unfortunately for Draco, the Azkaban Warden saw no reason to replace Bellatrix's clothes and when the cold wind of the north sea blew through the window his Aunt insisted that they share their body heat to keep warm at nights.

A/N: Next chapter we should get us into the graveyard and maybe even to the first ending.

Sorry if some of the imagined sights in this chapter caused a unsettled stomachs. But it should be the last one with such.

It took Draco Malfoy many hours to fall asleep that first night in Azkaban. The feeling of his Aunt's naked body against his wasn't horrible, but the fact that she hadn't brushed her teeth in over thirteen years made the situation extremely unbearable. Finally when he did fall asleep he found himself having one of his best erotic dreams ever. His betrothed Pansy Parkinson was naked with her body wrapped around his body. The feel of her beside him was intoxicating. He'd dreamed of that possibility a long time, but Pansy never allowed him to touch her body. As he caressed and fondled her naked body, he remembered the nightmare he had previous to this dream of a whole school year at Hogwarts being ignited, trampled, ignored and sent packing to Azkaban. He let out a long sigh as his eyes fluttered open. It took a few seconds before things came in to focus. "Why are there bars....." His eyes flew open as he realized the nightmare had been real. He then looked down and realized he had one of his aunt's breasts in his hand and he realized in her sleep she had put her hand down his pants and had a firm grasp upon him.

"AAAAAAARRRRRRGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHH
AAAAAAARRRRRRRGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHH"

Bellatrix Lestrange was lost in a wonderful dream. It had been a very long time since she had slept with her husband. Being locked in Azkaban with the Dementors stealing all happy memories also prevented her from dealing with the needs that developed. Physical needs coupled with a lack of mental ability to deal with those needs had left the witch quite frustrated and insane. But this dream was so real. She was draped over her husband and she knew finally her needs were going to be satisfied. Shortly after she had reached for her husband's privates and wondered why they had shrunk so much she was awakened by an ear splitting scream.

As Bellatrix opened her eyes, she found her nephew trying desperately to get out of bed as he continued to scream. Unfortunately for Draco, Bellatrix still had her hand firmly wrapped around his smallest appendage. Then again with so little to hold onto it didn't take much squirming to get out of her grasp.

The memory of that morning and several similar ones were added to the worst memories of Draco's life. As the Dementors glided past their cell several times each day, he had to relive those memories. It

seemed like all of the memories he was forced to relive over and over happened in the last school year.

After two months in his aunt's cell Draco remembered that Molly Weasley had said if he changed his mind he would still be welcome there. After a desperate plea to the warden, Draco was allowed to leave Azkaban and move to the Burrow. For the next few years he led a haunted life. The ghosts that lived in his grey eyes from his short stay in Azkaban terrified many people away. Even the thought of any naked female made him run away screaming. His arrogance was reduced to ordering Gnomes around in the garden and even they ignored him. Tragically it all came to an end only three years later. Shortly after Bill Weasley moved back to England and married a nice young muggleborn witch, they invited Draco to come live with them. After years of living with Molly Weasley he readily agreed. Unfortunately as soon as he stepped into their house with his few belongings, a black glow erupted from his body and he slumped over dead. The long forgotten oath he took so many years earlier in Dumbledore's office about never willingly living with a non-pureblood family took his life. His obituary was only two lines long.

%%%%%%%%%

Toward the end of May, Harry was sitting in the Gryffindor Common room waiting for girlfriend to return from her Arithmancy class. He was lost in thought and only barely registered Ron sitting in a corner playing chess with himself. It wasn't long before the Portrait hole swung open and Hermione rushed through holding a letter.

"Harry!" she yelled as she jumped into his lap and proceed to kiss him passionately before continuing. "Hedwig delivered this just now."

'Pbrrrrrp'

Harry and Hermione rolled their eyes at each other before she continued "Mum and Dad wants you to come stay with us sometime in the summer."

'Pbrrrrrp Pbrrrrrp'

"They also want you to come with us on a trip to Europe. We are going to take a train through the new Chunnel." At the confused look

on Harry's face she explained. "It was completed last year. They built a tunnel under the water all the way to France. It's going to be great. But anyway we'll take a train trip through Europe until we get to Rome and then spend several days there. We are even going to stop in Paris." She looked into Harry's emerald eyes. "They call it the City of Love."

"PPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPPPWWTTTTT
PPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPPPWWTTTTT"

Outside on a blank wall of the castle which had been under odorous assault for months, several stones crumbled and fell to the ground. The fat spider that had once again taken up residence there died instantly when one of the stones flattened him. Sir Cadogan was visiting a portrait near the area and noticed a small hole appear in the wall. "Some Rogue is trying to breach the walls." He immediately started chasing his pony. Finally giving up he started running from portrait to portrait yelling "TO ARMS! TO ARMS! We are under attack." Of course since he did that several times a day, everyone ignored him.

"City of Love? With you?" Harry asked as he moved a stray hair behind Hermione's ear before a light kiss and a nibble of the ear. He then whispered. "Mione, any city I will ever be in with you is my city of love."

"So you'll come?" Hermione asked.

"Do you even need to ask?" Harry replied. "Of course I will." Lost into the each other for the next ten minutes of snogging they didn't even hear the ever increasing sound of Ron's jealousy, but the hole in the castle wall grew larger and larger.

"Mione." Harry started a little while later when the kissing had settled down. "Do you know why I love that name for you?"

Hermione shook her head then said. "No but I love to hear it, because only you will ever be able to use that name without being cursed."

"Good. I like it because if you look at it, it says my one. You're my one and only. That's what I feel like I'm saying every time I say that name, Mione, my one and only. (A/N he pronounces it ME OWN

NEE)" He saw the small tear that threaten to come from his girlfriend and kissed her before continuing. "I told your father that the only thing I ever wanted to do is make you happy." The smile and wetness that reappeared in Hermione's eyes said a lot of what she thought of that. "I'm hoping this will make you happy." Harry pulled out a small box he had purchased recently with the help of Mrs. Granger who had sent several catalogs with suggestions. He opened the box and displayed a small ring with two hearts set with their tops touching as if they were kissing. Between the 'lips' of the hearts was a small diamond. "This is my promise that someday," he held the ring out and looked her in the eyes, "we will have our someday if you still want me."

Hermione looked at the beautiful ring her boyfriend was holding out to her. She knew Harry and promises. It was something he took extremely serious. She knew he was offering her a lifetime. She smiled at him and nodded in a fashion that would make Dobby jealous as more tears came into her eyes. She held out her left hand and he slid it on.

"I will love you always and forever Mione, my one and only."

"PPPWWWWTTTTPPPPPWWWWTTTT
PPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPPWWWWTTTT
PPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPPWWWWTTTT
PPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTT"

The whole wall of the hallway and a side of a classroom right below the hall crumbled. Fortunately Professor Flitwick's prompt actions saved his students from being overwhelmed by the odorous assault. It took thirty-seven brave house-elves to eventually repair the damage.

%%%%%%%%%

The Dark Lord baby thingy was having an absolutely horrible day. Wormtail had let his snake venom potion boil too long and it had burned the roof of Voldemort's mouth. He hadn't even been able to curse Wormtail properly for the pain in his mouth. As the Dark baby probed the roof of his mouth with this tongue he thought of numerous ways he would torture the rat when he could utter the word "CRUCIO!" properly again.

Then Wormtail had let Barty Crouch escape. He had of course some lame excuse of being out shopping for more Evil Villain waste capture devices when the escape happened, but Lord Voldemort knew he could accept no excuses or the next thing that would happen would be his most trusted servant at Hogwarts would be coming up with an excuse for not getting Potter into the graveyard.

"EVERYTHING COULD BE RUINED BY YOUR FAILURE WORMTAIL!" Screeched Voldemort. That caused his mouth to hurt even worse. "If my plans are ruined because of your carelessness, I'll feed you to Nagini." He looked down at his favorite snake that was suddenly shaking its head back and forth. Voldemort could feel the disgust in coming from the snake at the thought of eating Wormtail. He looked back at Wormtail. "Get an owl off to Crouch immediately telling him to be on the lookout for his father. When you are finished get back here so I can use my wand to see just how hollow you head really is!"

"Yes My Lord." Peter replied as he backed away from the playp....Evil Villain Restoration Module where his Master was petting his favorite snake again.

"Nagini." Voldemort sighed to the snake after Pettigrew had departed. "I'm beginning to think Wormtail likes the torture too much."

%%%%%%%%%

Ron no longer had his egg with him everywhere he went. Ever since it had been stolen for the second task he had been worried about it. The twins finally suggested that he send it back to the Burrow for safe keeping. They finally convinced him that it would be a great idea, and even offered to send it for him. Ron failed to notice the grin exchanged between the twins as he handed the egg to them and scurried off to the Great Hall for dinner. They had suggested the idea directly before dinner when they knew their brother would be distracted with the thoughts of food. The egg wasn't sent until several days after the twins got their hands on it. The next time Ronald Weasley – TriWizard Champion ever opened the egg it would not wail, but it would probably cause him to wail.

"Mr. Weasley." Professor McGonagall said one day in late May as her fourth year students were leaving Transfiguration. "I need a

word." After everyone else was gone she continued. "You are to go down to the Quidditch field tonight at nine o'clock Mr. Weasley." McGonagall told him. "Mr. Bagman will be there to tell the champions about the third task."

As Ron was leaving the classroom he had one thought. "Cool, we finally get a Quidditch task which I'll of course have no problems with though Krum might be a challenge...hey Krum, I wonder if he'll let me ride his broomstick?"

At half past eight Ron walked past Harry and Hermione who were busy writing their charms essay. "WELL." He said loudly. "I have to go see what the NEXT task they have for us CHAMPIONS is. After that we CHAMPIONS will probably have some kind of party, so nobody needs to wait up for me. I guess it's too bad some people have to do homework tonight."

Harry looked at his girlfriend and winked. Leaning over he said in a loud whisper, "I love you Mione." His lips found hers and an all familiar war of tongues commenced.

'Pbrrrrrp Pbrrrrrp'

Once Ron had departed the common room Harry shook his head. "He'll never understand that I got the better end of the bargain. He might have got his moment, but I got a lifetime." He said as he looked into Hermione's almond eyes.

As Ron descended the staircase into the entrance hall, he saw Cedric coming up from the Hufflepuff dorms. "Hey Cedric." He yelled out. "Quidditch field. Going to be an easy one this time."

Cedric just kept his head down and walked more quickly.

"We never did get around to wand cleaning." Ron continued without noticing Cedric's no reply. "What about after we get finished this evening? But only if Krum won't let me ride his broomstick."

Cedric broke out in a full run disappearing into the darkness.

"He must be one of those people who always has to get to things first." Ron thought to himself. "Well that's definitely not me."

He walked down the dark lawn to the Quidditch stadium, turned through a gap in the stands, and walked out onto the field.

Ron did not understand what he was looking at. The Quidditch field was no longer smooth and flat. It looked as though somebody had been building long, low walls all over it that twisted and crisscrossed in every direction. "Someone isn't taking good care of the Quidditch field this year. They should be ashamed of themselves. Oh well, hopefully they'll have it cleaned up before the third task."

"Hello there!" called a cheery voice.

Ludo Bagman was standing in the middle of the field with Krum, Cedric and Fleur. Ron made his way toward them, climbing over the plants. "WHAT THE BLOODY HELL! Can't someone cut this crap down? Ouch...that branch just snagged me." He had opened a hole in Ron's robes. The other three champions saw at once that he still preferred going starkers under his robes.

A look of disgust passed over Fleur's face as she looked at the fourth champion. She slowly inched herself to the other side of the clearing from him. She was afraid if he did slap her butt again, she might not be able to contain her inner Veela and end up breaking her promise to Hermione.

"Well, what d'you think?" said Bagman happily as Ron climbed over the last hedge. "Growing nicely, aren't they? Give them a month and Hagrid'll have them twenty feet high."

"But how are we supposed to play Quidditch with these things twenty feet high?" Ron asked.

"Don't worry you'll have your Quidditch field back to normal once the task is over!" Bagman said.

"Over? But..." Ron started and just got a confused look on his face.

"Now, I imagine you can guess what we're making here?" Bagman said.

"A bloody mess?" Ron asked as he looked around expecting everyone to agree with him.

No one else spoke for a moment. Then -

"Maze," grunted Krum.

"That's right!" said Bagman. "A maze. The third task's really very straightforward. The Triwizard Cup will be placed in the center of the maze. The first champion to touch it will receive full marks."

Ron's face fell as he heard that. "No...no Quidditch? No Quaffle or snitch to catch?"

Everyone ignored Ron as Fleur asked "We seemly 'ave to get through the maze?"

"There will be obstacles," said Bagman happily, bouncing on the balls of his feet. "Hagrid is providing a number of creatures . . . then there will be spells that must be broken ... all that sort of thing, you know. Now, the champions will enter the maze by the current point order. So Fleur you'll go in first, followed by Cedric after two minutes and then Krum a minute after that." Bagman then turned to the fourth Champion, "Uh..Mr. Weasley, you'll enter the Maze about," He quickly started counting on his fingers, "twenty minutes after Krum gets into the Maze. Presuming of course the others aren't finished by then, but everyone should have a chance, and it should be a lot of fun eh?"

Ron was about to ask a question when Bagman said, "Well since no one else has any questions, we'll go back to the castle. It's a bit chilly..." He turned and left quickly.

Ron looked at the other three Champions as they all started walking away. He knew now was his chance. "KRUM!" he yelled at the Durmstrang Champion.

Krum obviously heard him as his pace to get away quickened.

Ron hurried along after him yelling "AS A FELLOW CHAMPION CAN I RIDE YOUR BROOMSTICK? OR MAYBE I CAN GET A BROOM AND WE CAN PLAY WITH YOUR BALLS?" As he was trying to get over the last hedge his robes snagged on one of the branches leaving a large gap. Fleur lost her dinner almost immediately while Cedric had to force images of Cho into his head to quell his queasiness. Ron spent two minutes freeing himself from the branch

and by then Krum was on a dead run and had already neared the forbidden forest as it was the most direct route back to his ship.

"He's going to get his broom, excellent." Ron thought and raced after him.

As Ron rushed along following the path Krum had taken, a man stepped out in front of him. Ron thought he might look familiar but it didn't matter.

"Dumbledore!" gasped the man. He reached out and seized a handful of Ron's robes, stopping him and dragging him closer, though his eyes were staring over Ron's head. "I need... see ... Dumbledore. ..."

"I don't care who in the bloody hell you want to see." Ron shouted as he kept his eyes on Krum. "Get away from me. Can't you see I'm busy?"

"I've done . . . stupid . . . thing . . ." the man breathed. He looked utterly mad. His eyes were rolling and bulging, and a trickle of spittle was sliding down his chin. Every word he spoke seemed to cost him a terrible effort. "Must. . . tell. . .Dumbledore . . ."

"Then go tell him." Ron said and shoved the man aside as he pursued Krum. Crouch hit his head on a rock as he fell to the ground rendering him unconscious. Mr. Crouch was still there when his son stumbled upon him sometime later. The younger Crouch killed his father, transfigured his body into a bone and buried it inside the Forest.

Ron waited outside the Durmstrang ship for two hours before he realized the Karkarov probably wouldn't let Krum out past curfew. "If only that idiot hadn't tried to stop me." He muttered as he slowly walked back to the castle.

%%%%%%%%%

Hermione Granger was lying on her bed late at night reflecting on her past year since she had started dating Harry Potter. She thought of the looks, the kisses, and the caresses he had given her. She thought of the Yule Ball and of the flowers. She thought of the necklace and the ring. She thought of the promise that was behind

the ring. His eyes danced in her mind as she could hear him saying 'I love you' and she thought of what Harry Potter meant to her. With all that he had given her, she wanted to give him something special in return. When she finally realized what she wanted to give him, the internal debate that pursued lasted a lot less time than she ever thought it would.

The next day she made a stop in the Hospital Wing and had a discussion with Madam Pomfrey. The nurse was not surprised to see the young witch and with a smile she proceeded to teach a blushing Hermione not only the correct spells but another simple spell to make sure the first spells had been performed correctly. Two nights later on a couch in the Room of Requirements Harry and Hermione were engaged in a heated snogging session. Hermione guided Harry's hands places where by agreement had been off limits before. Harry stopped and looked at Hermione questioningly.

"I want you to Harry." She replied. "I want us to."

"How...how far?"

Hermione had come to the Room earlier and practiced her next wish to make sure it would be perfect. She turned and made the request of the Room and a bed appeared. Looking back at Harry she simply said, "I won't be stopping you tonight love."

Harry eyes widen as he saw the bed and realized what she was implying. He turned back to her and nervously asked. "Ah..ar...are you sure?"

Hermione nodded. "This isn't something I just thought of Harry. I had a talk with Madam Pomfrey earlier in the week and I've already performed the spells." She looked into his eyes and he into hers. Words and emotions passed between them without a sound. A smile, a kiss and hand in hand they made their way to the bed.

They spent the next hour exploring each others bodies and finally the two people in love became lovers. Though painful for a short time for Hermione, Harry's tenderness made the pain subside quickly and soon she found herself in a blissful paradise. Hermione quickly discovered that similar to Harry's saving people syndrome, he had a much more serious issue of pleasing Hermione syndrome. His focus and determination not to mention youthful recovery time

was all set to make this night, and many more future nights the best of Hermione's life.

Later two sweaty teens were in the bed. One draped over the other and both taking recovery breaths of air. Harry looked at Hermione and after brush of a wild hair away from her face, he could only say, "I love you."

"I love you too Harry." Hermione replied and felt something stir against her. Looking at Harry her eyebrow raised, "Again?"

He raised his eyebrows and grinned his lop sided grin at her.

She rolled her eyes but a smile broke out over her face. If one thing had been proven in the last four years, Hermione Granger was always up for a challenge.

%%%%%%%%%

In Riddle House an Evil Baby thingy started screaming in pain. "MAKE IT STOP!"

"What is it milord?" Wormtail asked.

"I don't know. It's like pure happiness is invading my mind and it's horrible." Voldemort said. He raised his wand but through the blissful pain that was enveloping him he couldn't find the hate to curse his devoted follower for not stopping the pain.

Lord Voldemort used the time between the periods of pain to deduce that he had some kind of connection with Harry Potter and his nemesis was engaged in something extremely pleasurable.

"NO NOT AGAIN!" He screamed as the pain started again and again and again. He was reduced to a sobbing wreck by the end of the night. His body and mind tortured similar to the Cruciatus curse he subjected to his followers.

During the days to follow Wormtail suffered during the day as Voldemort dished out all the hate he had for the new found happiness in Harry Potter into his faithful servant. On many nights he would be in his Evil Villain Restoration Module screaming in agony for hours cursing the name Harry Potter as the boy-who-lived

was having sex over and over. It was just one more thing he promised himself before the torture started again that he would exact revenge from him for.

"Don't they ever stop?" He screamed as his eyes rolled back in his babyish head again as the pain flooded over him once more.

%%%%%%%%%

Harry turned to Hermione a couple of weeks later. "What's next?"

Hermione reached into her book bag and pulled out her copy of 'The Complete Manual of Sexual Positions' by Jessica Stewart. She flipped through the pages scrunching her nose and biting her lip. Finally she paused at a page, "Well we haven't tried this one yet." She said. She looked at him with a gleam in her eye. "It looks like a lot of fun."

"Are you sure you can bend like that?"

"If I can't we can always go back to the one we like the best so far."

Harry took one more look at the picture then he pulled the book out of her hand and turned it sideways to make sure he understood what was supposed to be where and then tossed it aside. "Have I mentioned how much I love your love of books?"

"Once or twice, but it seems to be happening much more since I got that one and the Kama Sutra."

"Don't forget the one....what was it called...oh the Witches Guide to Increasing your Power through Orgasms."

"But it didn't work. It was a bunch of lies." Hermione exclaimed looking a bit put out.

"You didn't complain about putting it to the test did you?"

Hermione blushed as she remembered that night. If the book had been right, she would probably have been on par with Merlin after Harry spent the whole night with nothing but her pleasure on his mind. "No." She purred at him as a look of lust appeared in her eyes, "but if you ever want to put it to the test again, I'm willing too also."

"Maybe we'll start on that right after this position."

The giggling, laughter, moans and exclamations of ecstasy that reverberated around the Room of Requirements that evening went deep into the night.

%%%%%%%%%

The three other Champions had spent the last month doing everything possible to avoid Ron Weasley. In doing so they had become pretty good friends. As they talked about the third task one of them had an idea about the third task. In the whole spirit of International cooperation they all agreed to the plan.

%%%%%%%%%

"Luna." Krum said. "Tomorrow is the last task and next week I will be returning to Durmstrang."

Luna just smiled at Victor in her dreamy manner. Though not official the two of them had been inseparable since the Yule Ball. Her Ravenclaw dorm mates had stopped picking on her when Krum threaten to curse anyone who made his Luna sad. Luna had got all of her stuff back and even some clothes that didn't belong to her.

"I just want to say I will miss you greatly."

"You won't miss me." Luna replied still smiling.

A look of confusion crossed Krum's face, but confusion had become a normal part of his life in the last few months. "I won't?"

"Nope." Luna replied. "The Blibbering Humdingers have told me that you plan on inviting me to spend time with you and your family this summer."

"They did?"

"Yes and I know my father will be inviting you to our house also."

Krum shook his head. "What else did they say?"

She blushed a little then said. "I'm not sure if I should say anything, but they told me you plan on asking me to be your girlfriend."

Krum looked at the blond haired girl in amazement.

"They also said we would spend every summer and holiday together and on my seventeenth birthday...oh I definitely shouldn't tell you that."

"Tell me Luna please." Krum begged.

She looked away for a few seconds and then looked at Krum, "They said on my seventeenth birthday you would propose to me."

Krum's eyes widened. "They did? I vill?"

A look of disappointment and sadness crossed Luna's face. "I guess they could be wrong. But I...I've never known them to be."

Krum pulled her close to him. "Of course they're not vong. Here let me prove it. Luna vill you be my girlfriend."

A look of pure delight came over Luna's face and she through her arms around the Bulgarian Seeker. "YES!"

"And vill you come spend the summer vith me?"

"YES!"

A little later Luna was walking toward her Ravenclaw dorm with a large smile on her face. "I can't believe that worked." She thought.

Three years later on Luna's seventeenth birthday Krum did propose. A year after that the two of them were married in a lavish ceremony that all of Magical Europe celebrated. That night Luna found her Crumple-Horn Snorkack, but for some reason as much as she tried, the horn would never stay crumpled for very long.

%%%%%%%%%

It was finally the day of the third task and Barty Crouch Jr. was taking no chances. He had a plan A, a plan B and a plan C, though plan C mainly consisted of cutting off his arm and moving to

Australia it was still a plan. He looked at his calendar and smiled. Tonight Harry Potter will be delivered into his Master's grasp and his Master will return in all his might. "Tomorrow I get to kill HIM." In Barty's mind there was only one HIM. The HIM had red hair and more freckles than brain cells. Barty's watch chimed and he pulled out his flask of Fire Whiskey laced Polyjuice Potion and took a large swallow. Then he reached for one of his bottles of Ogden's Finest.

%%%%%%%%%

"RONNIKENS!" Molly Weasley shouted as her son entered the room beside the Great Hall. She rushed over to her youngest son and started brushing his robes free of lint. Then she pulled out a handkerchief and after wetting it in her mouth started rubbing the dirt that was on her son's nose away.

Bill Weasley was home for a short break before going back to Egypt. He had accompanied his mother to Hogwarts to greet his brother before he was to face the final task. As his mother babied Ron, Bill's eyes swept the room and came to rest of one most beautiful sights he had ever seen. She was a Blond young woman with beauty and a look of strength in her gorgeous blue eyes. Immediate in his mind he saw her by his side living in a small cottage on the sea shore. He saw she went to Beauxbaton and realized she was their Champion. He put on his most charming smile as her own eyes swept the room.

Fleur Delacour was with her mother and sister. After greeting them she started looking around the room at the other Champion's families. Cedric was with his mother and father. Victor was speaking rapid Bulgarian to his dark-haired mother and father and as her eyes kept moving over her mother's shoulder she saw an extremely handsome man. Long hair pulled into a pony tail, dragon hide boots and an earring. She could see the smile that had come over his face as he looked at her and she was just about to smile back when...

"How's my big brother." Ron said to Bill slapping him on the back.

"Brother?" Fleur thought. "No way in bloody hell." She quickly turned back to her mother and sister and started telling them about a young witch named Hermione Granger that she hoped to introduce them too soon. She also told her mother that she had decided not to apply for the job at Gringotts and that her new friend Michelle and she

were planning on touring Germany over the summer holidays. Her mother was very happy that Fleur was making friends.

Right after dinner Dumbledore rose from his throne and announced it was time for the third task to start. That the Champions should follow Ludo Bagman while the rest of the students should head down to the Quidditch field.

A/N: We'll leave it there so the next chapter will have the entire third task and the finale (maybe).

One favor don't ask about how Ron dealt with Draco at the Burrow. Wait for the next chapter. Ron's woes are not over yet.

Chapter 15

Right after dinner Harry and Hermione along with the rest of the school made their way down to the Quidditch Pitch. Twenty foot hedges were crisscrossing the field. As they started for the stands Mad-eye Moody came up and put his hand on Harry's shoulder causing Harry to flinch.

"Well Mr. Potter." The DADA teacher started. "Ready to watch your friend?"

"Yeah I guess." Harry replied as tried to get away from the ex-Auror. The smell of Fire Whiskey had been permeating the classroom lately and it was lingering around Moody now.

"He's not as good as you." Moody continued. "Better stay close. You might have to go save him."

"He'll be fine." Harry replied and finally pulled free and hurried on with Hermione. If the two of them had looked back they would have seen Professor Moody hold up a single black hair and smile.

"In case I need plan B." The polyjuiced impostor thought as he took out a small glass vial and put the hair in to it.

As Harry and Hermione found the best seats they could they realized the stadium seats were only twenty feet high as well. So standing they could actually see over the hedges but couldn't see anything going on in the Maze.

Hermione quickly grasp the meaning of the hedges. "It's going to be a maze. " She exclaimed. "So if all they have to do is run through the hedges then maybe Ron will be alright." At that moment a sound they both recognized as a blast ended skrewt propelling itself came from inside the maze followed by a roar from some other unidentified creature. Hermione looked nervously at Harry, "Or maybe not."

"Is there anything we can do to help him?" Harry asked.

Hermione's bottom lip disappeared into her mouth and it was all Harry could do not to entice the lip back out with a few nibbles and kisses. A look of inspiration passed over her face and she dug into

her bag. "I think I still have it with me." She muttered and after a few seconds she pulled out the ragged parchment Ron signed all those months ago. She looked around to make sure no one was looking and after canceling the previous overlapping jinx she mutter a few words and wave her wand over the parchment.

"What did you do?" Harry asked.

"I set the spell up to switch the air to a place in front of him about twenty feet. It'll last the next two hours." Hermione explained. "I thought that if he comes across something that threatens him, he might be jealous of us being safe and well...." She shrugged. "I think that's about all I can do."

Harry wondered what would happen to a Dementor if it had to cross into such a barrier. "It might be an interesting experiment at some time." Harry thought. With his school grades almost equaling his girlfriend's now, he found himself thinking theoretically on occasion, willing to explore new ideas. That willingness had caused many great hours between Harry and Hermione in the Room of Requirements.

"I hope this doesn't take long." Hermione said.

Harry agreed. His mind was quickly leaving the Triwizard Tournament and returning to the Room of Requirements. Hermione had earlier shown him page eighty-seven of the book and he still wasn't quite sure how that particular position was possible, but he was really interested in finding out.

Hermione was still looking out over the maze. "So once again we wait for who knows how long and still not be able to see anything? Who in Merlin's name came up with these events?"

"Ministry I do believe."

Hermione put her hand to to head. "I was thinking of going to work there when I graduated." Hermione said with a sigh. "But if people like Percy Weasley and whoever the idiot was who thought up these events work there, I'll find employment elsewhere. I'd probably end up killing too many stupid people."

"Something similar for me. Moody thought I'd be a good Auror." Harry said looking at his beautiful girlfriend. "But if he's supposed to be one of the better ones, then I don't think that's for me. I mean I don't want to end up looking like him in thirty or forty years. Not something to put on a job recruitment poster is it?"

Hermione laughed. "I agree."

%%%%%%%%%

The four Champions followed Ludo Bagman down from the Great Hall. Fleur, Cedric and Krum were all walking together and several paces behind was Ron Weasley.

"So guys, party tonight?" Ron asked. "Veela, I had a house-elf put some Butterbeer on ice for us. Krum....." the rest ended as a silencing hex came from Fleur's wand. It didn't seem like Ron noticed as he continued to talk but saying nothing. Cedric and Krum smiled at the Beauxbaton Champion and mouthed a quick "thanks". Shortly they were standing on the Quidditch field and in front of them was a large gap in the hedges. Obviously they were at the entry to the maze.

As the day gave way to dusk the first stars started to appear in the sky. The sounds of hundreds of feet filled the air as the students walked to the stands. Hagrid, Professor McGonagall, and Professor Flitwick came walking into the stadium with Professor Moody limping quickly to catch up. They all approached Bagman and the champions. Each of them was wearing large, red, luminous stars on their hats, all except Hagrid, who had his on the back of his moleskin vest.

"We are going to be patrolling the outside of the maze," said Professor McGonagall to the champions. "If you get into difficulty, and wish to be rescued, send red sparks into the air, and one of us will come and get you, do you understand?"

Cedric, Krum and Fleur nodded while Ron thought "Of course they need to know that."

"Off you go, then!" said Bagman brightly to the four patrollers. McGonagall looked at Ron and wondered if this would be the last time she saw him alive. She was unnerved by herself when she

realized that she really didn't care. Then the four of them walked away in different directions, to station themselves around the maze. Bagman now pointed his wand at his throat, muttered, "Sonorus," and his magically magnified voice echoed into the stands.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the third, er...well second...anyway the final task of the Triwizard Tournament is about to begin! Let me remind you of the current standings! In first place is the Beauxbaton Champion Fleur Delacour after her - uh – impressive display against her dragon." The contingent of blue robed Beauxbatons erupted in cheering, something that hadn't happened in the first event. Fluer turned and gave a warm smile and a wave to her schoolmates. "It's nice to have friends." She thought.

In his private seat Cornelius Fudge thought of that first event and how much the Ministry had to pay for the death of the Dragon. He thought about the bill for the decontamination of Black lake as well. The whole tournament was well over the Budget allocated.

Ludo continued through the cheering. "In second place from here at Hogwarts is Cedric D..."

"THAT'S MY SON!" Ranged out from the stands and Cedric rolled his eyes at his father's comments.

"Er...in second place is Cedric Diggory." All of the stands erupted in cheering with the Yellow and Black robed student especially loud.

Ludo smiled then continued again. "Followed closely behind Mr. Diggory is the Durmstrang Champion Victor Krum." The Durmstrang contingent erupted in cheering and stomping of their feet but piercing every other noise was a loud roar from a strange looking animal on a hat being worn by a Blond haired girl with dreamy eyes. The roar was so loud birds scattered from the Forbidden Forest. Krum knew his Luna was under that hat and he turned and smiled at his girlfriend.

Luna wasn't afraid for her boyfriend, neither was Cho for Cedric. They knew what the three older champions had planned.

After the roar reverberations had quieted down, Ludo was able to continue the introductions. "Currently in last place but not out of the..er..well he still has a chance is..." Ludo Bagman started patting

down his pockets until he found a parchment which he read from, "Ronald Weasley also from here at Hogwarts."

"THAT'S MY RONNIKINS!" The shrill voice of Molly Weasley pierced the air, but outside of a couple of cheers from the Creevy brothers and Bill, no other sounds were heard. Harry was very busy at the moment keeping Hermione's lips warmed even if it was almost the end of June.

"Yes well let's get this started." Ludo said. "So ... on my whistle, Miss Delacour. Three - two - one -" He gave a short blast on his whistle.

Fleur looked at Cedric and Krum and winked. She walked to the edge of the entry and with a wave of her wand she conjured a chair and sat down and cross her legs.

Ludo Bagman looked confused. This wasn't how it was suppose to work "Uh...young lady you're suppose to go into the maze and you know...er..find the cup."

"I know." Fleur said and looked away.

"She's scared. She's too scared to go in. I'll have to comfort her later after I win." Ron thought. "Just shows a girl should never have been selected as a Champion."

A minute passed with everyone in the stands and judges table staring at Fleur and she still had not left her chair. Bagman finally said, "Mr. Diggory...it's your turn. Three-two-one-" and he gave another short blast on his whistle.

Repeating exactly what Fleur did, Cedric walked over to the entry of the maze and conjured a chair and sat down beside the Beauxbaton Champion who turned and smiled at him.

Crickets could be heard in the silence that surrounded the maze. An occasional noise came from the maze but not a single student, judge or guest made a sound. Ludo was ready to pull his hair out of his head. He had a considerable bet on Cedric to get to the cup first.

"Uh..Mr. Diggory?" Ludo nodded toward the opening. "The objective is to be the first to the cup."

"I know." Cedric replied and then he turned and smiled at Fleur again and relaxed in his chair.

"Him too? Well he is a Hufflepuff so what do you expect. Bunch of losers they are." Ron thought. "He better keep his hands off my Veela while I'm in there."

A couple of minutes later Krum repeated the same thing. Soon all three older participants were relaxing in front of the maze.

Clitter Clitter the Crickets were getting to be exceptionally loud. Even Rita Skeeter's Quick-Quote Quill was confused and had started quoting the crickets.

"VICTOR KRUM is a coward? Never would have seen that coming." Ron thought but then he smiled. He could already feel the weight of a thousand galleons in his money pouch. Then a worried thought passed his mind. "Will a thousand galleons even fit in my bag? If not I guess I'll have to buy a new bag." He thought of the looks of awe that Harry and Hermione not to mention the whole school would have on their faces when he emerged from the maze holding the Triwizard cup. He thought how jealous they would be of him as he hoisted the Cup over his head. He started mentally going through all the things he would be buying starting the next day. "A firebolt, new clothes, season tickets to the Cannons..."

Ron was shaken from his thoughts by the magically enhanced voice of Ludo Bagman. "Well it's time for our...uh...fourth Champion to enter the maze. He pulled out his parchment again and read it quickly. "Uh...Mr. Weasley if you will please. Three-two-one." He again blew on his whistle and waited to see if this Champion was going to enter the maze.

Ron took off immediately. Passing the other three Champions who smiled at him as he went by he quickly disappeared into the maze. Fleur, Krum and Cedric looked at each other and continued to wait. The one thing Ron and the other Champions had forgot about was the silencing hex that Fleur had cast on him.

Ron ran down between the hedges for about fifty yard until there was a fork. "I'll go right, because I'm always right." Ron thought. He ran another thirty yard and turned a corner and stopped dead in his

tracks. Silent screams erupted from his throat and he tried to cast hex after hex. Jabbing his wand at the horrible sight in front of him, he backed into a corner in terror.

The small garden spider that was a few feet in front of him was just standing in the path minding its own business. It had no clue that the big thing that had just appeared was even alive much less trying to kill it.

The other three Champions finally stood from their chairs.

FLASHBACK!

Fleur, Michelle, Cedric, Cho, Krum and Luna were all sitting around the large oak tree near Black lake discussing the third task.

"Anyone know what kind of animals zis 'Argrid might put in ze maze?" Fleur asked.

"He has something called a blast ended skrewt which is a poisonous stingered creature that propels itself by explosions." Cedric said. "There are also rumors of Acromantulas."

"Madam Maxine zinks zere might be Boggarts as well. She also 'eard about some dangerous plants inside the 'edges."

"What about you Victor?" Cedric asked. "Have you heard anything?"

Krum was deep in thought but Luna's hand on his leg brought him around. He turned to the group and said. "This is going to be on a Quidditch pitch right?"

"Yes."

"Then vy fight these creatures? There is a much simpler way."

"What do you mean?"

"Vell on a Quidditch pitch vat do you normally do?"

"Fl..." Cedric started and then his and Fleur's eyes widened.

"So we don't need to go through the maze we just need to go over it." Cedric said. "Is there a rule against doing that?"

"Zat Ludo didn't mention any such rule. 'e basically said ze first person to touch ze Cup wins."

Cedric looked at Krum. "I'm sure you're going to get there the fastest. You're the best seeker in the world."

"Fleur vill. She vill have a head start by a couple of minutes." Krum answered.

Fleur looked at him. "Zen why mention it? Ze cup could 'ave been yours. I wouldn't 'ave zought to use a broom?"

Victor looked at Luna and smiled. "I've learned this year that some things are more important than vinning."

Fleur thought about that answer and looked around at what she now called her friends and made the suggestion. "Togezer. We all go togezer and touch ze trophy at ze same time."

"Are you sure?" Cedric asked. He would have expected something like this if he was competing against Harry Potter maybe, but here were representatives from two other schools.

"Zis is all about friendship and cooperation isn't eet?" Fleur asked. "Let's show ze world what eet means to cooperate."

The three Champions all nodded to each other and all said "Together."

"Vat about the fourth?" Krum asked looking especially at Cedric.

"If it was still Harry Potter, I'd have him join us. Actually I think if it was him, he would have suggested it to start with." Cedric said. "You know he even warned me about the Dragons." He looked at his other Co-Champions. "But I can't bring myself to offer the same invitation to Weasley. I swear he's thicker than a stone."

"Now Cedric," Luna said dreamily, "I happen to have a lot of stones who are my friends. You don't have to insult them like that."

Fleur and Krum both agreed with Cedric and Luna.

Fleur laughed a small laugh as the thought of the red-headed Champion. "If eet wasn't for 'im zough, I doubt I would 'ave done so well against my dragon. Only reason I was a Veela was because 'e slapped my rear."

Krum looked over at Luna as something suddenly clicked, "Your weasel you were hiding from?"

Luna nodded.

"Vell I guess if it wasn't for him I wouldn't have met Luna then."

"It was something he said that gave me the clue to solving the egg." Cedric chimed in. "Though I admit I'm still hoping to have that obliterated from my mind someday soon."

"So should we let 'im join us?"

"NO!" Everyone in the group yelled at once.

"But," Cedric said with gleam in his eye, "We should give him his chance to go in the Maze. It's only right."

"What if 'e zinks to use a broom?" Fleur asked.

The laughter that question brought on lasted a long long time. The possibility of Ronald Weasley thinking.

End Flashback

When the three other Champions rose from their seats the stands erupted in cheers. Deep in the Maze Ron Weasley couldn't hear anything.

"Accio Broom." Fleur yelled.

"Accio Broom." Krum yelled.

"Accio Broom." Cedric yelled.

Each of the champions had positioned their brooms near the Beauxbaton carriage. It didn't take long for three brooms to come screaming onto pitch and stop at each of their sides. Ten seconds later the three champions were flying above the maze and could easily see the cup ahead of them. They also saw something that looked like a Sphinx, an Acromantula and several other very dangerous creatures. They quickly landed in the clearing next to the table with the cup. Each put their hand near the cup and Fleur and Krum nodded at Cedric.

"On three." Cedric said. "One....two....three." All three hands touched the cup simultaneously and each felt the tug behind their navel as they were pulled away.

A second later the three of them landed outside the maze next to a startled Bagman.

Ludo Bagman looked stunned. With this voice still magically magnified he said. "We have our uh..Champion...I mean...Champions...Uh...well...it looks we have a three way tie."

Silence. Crickets could be heard again. The Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge came storming over. "WHO thought up this ridiculous event? I thought they were going to be fighting creatures and Monsters. Do you know how much paperwork I did to get that Sphinx in here? How much the Ministry paid for all of this?" He said waving his arms around. "And all they had to do was fly over the maze?" He looked at his watch, "Once they started it took less than a minute."

"Well...you see..." Bagman started as he scratched his head looking nervous. He was the one who had thought of the three events but all the bludgers to his head had caused severe brain damage over the years. When he looked up he saw the Goblins he had placed the bet with start toward him. Bagman turned and ran. Less than a month later Ludo Bagman was working alongside Lucious Malfoy inside the tunnels below Greenland. His demise was much less pleasant than of his coworker. A year later the Goblins were positioning a Dragon to guard the high security vaults. On that particular day Bagman was on Dragon dung duty. Unfortunately he started cleaning before the Dragon was done emptying it's bowels. Bagman found himself buried in a ton of Dragon dung and when the other workers tried to dig him out the Goblins prevented it. As they pointed out the Dragon

dung was much more valuable than Bagman and constant digging into it with the wrong equipment would reduce its value. It was a week later when his body was finally uncovered.

Hermione looked at Harry "That was it? They just flew over the maze? Who was the Bloody idiot who didn't think of that?"

Harry shrugged at her. "We already said it was an idiot who thought up this event." After a kiss to calm his girlfriend down she added. "Now what about page eighty-seven now?"

Hermione eyes widened and she grinned and nodded. The two of them quickly departed their seats and was about to leave the pitch when they heard a voice behind them. "POTTER!"

Harry stopped and saw Professor Moody stomping his way toward them. "I was coming to find you. I think your friend is in trouble Potter. He's still in the maze and I thought I heard screams. Here take this lantern and go see if you can find him."

Harry looked at Hermione and then back to Moody who was still trying to catch up to them. He quickly weighed going into a dangerous maze in search of a jealous idiot against going to the Come and go Room and work on page eighty-seven with his girlfriend. The decision process took less time than Ron took to eat a biscuit. "You do it. Think it's a Professor's job." He said to Moody and then he grabbed Hermione's hand and they rushed off to the Castle and the Room of Requirements leaving the bogus defense instructor stunned. "What about his Saving People Syndrome? Especially his friend?" He asked himself. He continued to follow for a short time yelling for them to come back and save their friend but nothing slowed them down. He thought of stunning Potter but as he saw numerous other students now starting back to the castle along with Hagrid he realized it wouldn't go unnoticed and he probably wouldn't get to Potter once he was stunned.

"Well there goes Plan A." Crouch thought. "Time for Plan B." He stomped off back to the maze. Using his magical eye he quickly found the ginger headed idi..Champion. He was huddled in a corner of the maze jabbing his wand at something. At first Crouch couldn't figure out what the boy was fighting but then he saw the spider. Not the six foot Acromantula spider but a one inch garden type that could be found around most hedges. Crouch pulled out a flask of

polyjuice potion and dropped Harry's hair into the liquid. The liquid bubbled and frothed and then turned bright clear gold. "Damn, he is the golden boy isn't he?" Crouch thought. "Well that will make it easier." Then he remembered Potter's glasses. "Accio Potter's glasses."

Harry and Hermione were almost to the Castle when all of a sudden Harry's glasses went zooming off of his face. Harry looked at the glasses disappearing in the distance. "Probably Fred and George having a laugh." Harry said. "Just get me to the Room of Requirements now and I'll get them from them later, or maybe you can conjure me some new ones." It took a little longer, but Hermione finally was able to lead him to the proper place.

The glasses landed in Crouch's hand as he limped to where Ron continued his silent battle with the garden spider. When the fourth champion saw the DADA professor he quickly ran behind him and pointed at the spider. Crouch walked the two steps and with a sweep of his foot, he knocked the spider off the path.

Crouch turned to the boy and all the headaches of the past came back almost instantly overwhelming his senses. He took a deep breath and regained his composure. Then realizing how quiet it was in the maze and he thought "He probably doesn't know the task is over." He looked again at Ron and started. "Mr. Weasley you still have a chance at this but the other Champions are now in the maze."

Ron's eyes widened as Crouch continued knowing exactly what would push the boy on, "They probably think you're taking care of all the challenges."

Ron nodded in agreement.

"What you need is an edge. You need the same luck as Harry Potter." Crouch continued. "I mean he has all the luck and you have nothing right?"

Ron's nodding continued.

Crouch pulled out the flask of golden colored Polyjuice potion and showed it to Ron. This will give you his luck. This will make you

Harry Potter for an hour. Drink it and you'll definitely be going places."

Ron grabbed the flask and chugged the golden liquid in one gulp and a few seconds later he looked like Harry Potter in slightly oversized robes. Crouch handed him the glasses and said. "Now take this lantern. It's charmed to guide you to the Cup and protect you from any other creatures in the maze." Crouch tapped his wand to the Lantern and mutter a couple of words and then handed it to the fourth Champion.

Ron grabbed the Lantern and as he turned toward the path Crouch was pointing at, a wand came up behind his head and "Obliviate."

"Now he won't remember me giving him that or polyjuicing him."

The dazed looking fourth Champion dropped his wand as he walked slowly down the path and thirty seconds later the lantern glowed blue and he felt the pull behind his navel. Ron Weasley Triwizard Champion (though currently polyjuiced as Harry Potter) disappeared from the maze.

As Crouch watched the carrot topped idiot disappear he breathed a sigh of relief. He now could at least say he was tricked by Dumbledore if his Master found out the truth. Or at worst Plan C was still an option. He turned to walk back out of the maze. On the other side of the hedge from where he was, a Blast Ended Skrewt was preparing to propel itself. The flames from the skrewt passed through the hedges and ignited the robes of the Deatheater DADA professor. Since Crouch had been adding Firewhiskey to his polyjuice potion for months, every single cell in his body was saturated in the flammable liquid. The flames caught in the fumes of his breath and quickly ignited his entire body. The extremely hot flames burned everything to ash including the magical eye and wooden leg. The real Mad-Eye Moody was never found. He died of thirst and starvation in his own trunk. His trunk and other magical detection devices were stored away in a remote storage area in the castle in case Moody ever turned up to claim them.

Ron's feet slammed into the ground a few seconds after leaving the maze. Following his feet, his arse was the next part to hit and then his head. He looked around as he stood up while rubbing his backside and back of his head trying to figure out what just

happened. The last thing he remembered was fighting a spider and now he was holding a lantern and had no wand and no clue. He suddenly wished he had his egg with him. As he looked around he realized he was standing in a dark and overgrown graveyard; the black outline of a small church was visible beyond a large yew tree to his right. A hill rose above them to their left. A feeling of ill omen passed over him but Ron mistook it for hunger.

"I'll wait here. I'm sure someone will come and get me anytime now" He thought as he sat down and started patting his pockets looking for something to eat. It never crossed his mind to wonder why he was wearing glasses. Ron didn't hear the footsteps approach until a high pitch babyish voice said, "If it isn't Harry Potter at last. Welcome."

Ron turned around quickly and found himself staring at his old rat. Well not actually the rat but the person his rat turned into last year. "Wormtail?" Ron screamed silently. Then he thought of what else was said. "Harry?" and quickly looked around for his friend. But when he didn't see him he turned back to the small man in front of him. That's when he noticed the infant in wormtail's arms. Confusion rung in Ron's head. It rung even louder because of the echo effect that existed in the mostly empty space between his ears. "When did Wormtail have a baby? Oh Merlin it's the ugliest baby too. Hate to think who the mother must have been."

"Prepare him." The baby said in its high pitched voice.

"Yes Milord." Wormtail said to the evil looking baby thing. He sat the infant down and grabbed Ron and started pulling him away.

"Milord?" Ron thought as he found himself being dragged over to a marble headstone. Just as Ron was forced against the stone and cords conjured to hold him in place he saw a name.

TOM RIDDLE.

The name seemed familiar but he couldn't place it. But that wasn't surprising as Ron's mind and body was frozen in panic and confusion. "WHAT? WHO? Where's was the Cup? The Galleons? Why am I being tied up?" He mentally cried out. He opened his mouth and for the first time in a long time sounds poured out as the silencing spell broke. He wanted to say something, anything but only

garbled nonsense poured out in his panic. When Wormtail had checked every knot, he pulled a length of material from his robes and shoved it into Ron's mouth cutting off even the sounds Ron could make. As Ron tried to look around he found he could only look directly ahead of him.

Ron heard a noise at his feet and when he looked down he saw a gigantic snake slithering through the grass, circling the headstone where he was tied. Right before passing out in fear his last thoughts were, "Why does Harry Potter always get the easy ones?"

When he came to, Wormtail was pointing his wand at him. Twenty feet behind Wormtail was a huge cauldron. It was big enough for someone to sit in. The first thoughts Ron had when he saw it, was. "It would be great to make stew in that size cauldron." The Cauldron seemed to be filled with water and a fire was burning underneath it. "Maybe that's what he's going to do. Could Wormtail be in charge of the feast?" Ron thought hopefully. The grumbling in his stomach concurred.

Wormtail picked the baby back up. "Harry Potter." The baby said.

Ron just stared at the black and red evil baby thingy who spoke almost perfect English.

"You know who I am?" the baby asked as coldly as his high pitched voice could muster.

"Someone keeping me from my stew." Ron tried to yell but it only came out as "mmmhmmhmm" through the material in his mouth.

"It's been three years since you banished me from Quirrell. Remembered now?"

"Quirrell but...but..that was...AAAAARRRRRRRRGGGGGGHHHHH" Ron froze in panic. His eyes were wider than when he looked upon a Christmas feast. He tried to shout "I'M RON WEASLEY NOT HARRY POTTER!" but only "MMMMHHHHHHMMMM" came out from the material in his mouth.

"Ah..I see you know now. Excellent. Now I'm going to use your blood to give me a new body." The dark baby hissed. "And then I'm going to torture you as you've tortured me all of these years and especially

these last few weeks. Do you know the pain you've caused me while you were busy shagging that mudblood of yours? Yes I know of her. I'll be torturing her in the future. A nice present for my most faithful servants. Did you really have to do her four or five times a night for the last month? I suffered night after night writhing in agony every time you two enjoyed your little pleasures, but tonight you will suffer. You will suffer more than you can ever imagine."

Ron's eyes widened even more as again he tried to shout out he wasn't Harry Potter.

The baby looked at Wormtail. "Is it ready?"

They both looked at the cauldron where the liquid began not only to bubble, but to send out fiery sparks, as though it were on fire. The steam was as the whole surface of the water was now alight with sparks. It might have been encrusted with diamonds.

"It is ready Master."

"Now then."

Wormtail carried the hairless red-black Most Evil baby thingy to the Cauldron and lowered it in. If Ron hadn't been too terrified of what was going on, he would have heard it hit the bottom of the Cauldron with a thud. A thought broke through his fear filled mind. "Shagging mudblood?" What that meant immediately jumped into his mind. "Harry's been shagging Hermione? Four or five times a night? I'm tied to a bloody tombstone and Harry's shagging Hermione?" Ron tried to raise a hand to struggle loose as the jealousy overcame him. Wormtail noticed the movement and looked up to make sure the knot was still secure but that was the last thing he remembered outside of what happened next.

The rumbles started deep inside of Ron as he imagine his two ex friends in bed together and the next second.
"PPPPPPWWWWTTTTTTTTPPPPP PPPP WWWTTTTTPPPP
TTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPP
PPPPPPWWWWTTTTTTTTTPPPPP PPPPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPP
TTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPP
PPPPPPWWWWTTTTTTTTTPPPPP PPPPPWWWWTTTTTPPPP
TTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPP
PPPPPPWWWWTTTTTTTTTTTTTPPPPP PPPPPWWWWTTTTTPPPP

TTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPPP
PPPPPPWWWWTTTTTTTTTPPPPP PPPPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPP
TTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTTTTTTTPPPPPP PPPPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPP
TTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTTTTTTTPPPPPP PPPPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPP
TTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTTTTTTTPPPPPP PPPPPWWWWTTTTTPPPPP
TTTTPPPPPPWWWWTTTTTTTTTPPPPPP"

The cauldron just happened to be twenty feet in front of Ron and the volume of gas that was dispersed into that area immediately connected with the flames under the Cauldron. The resulting explosion superheated the liquid in the giant iron pot which immediately steamed the infant thingy that lay at the bottom to death. It also threw Peter Pettigrew several hundred feet leaving him unconscious and smoking but alive. The tombstone Ron was attached to uprooted and it and Ron were also thrown some distance. Between the fear, the explosion and him hitting his head when he hit the ground Ron lapsed into unconsciousness. The large Cauldron rolled over on its side flattening Nagini and dumping the infant lobster thingy out onto the ground.

The extremely large amount of magical energy contained in contents of the cauldron were released in the explosion. That amount of energy being released registered quickly in Auror Headquarters. Since it was a known muggle locations, several Aurors were dispatched to investigate. Two of those sent were Kingsley Shacklebolt and the newest Auror Nymphadora Tonks fresh out of Auror training.

Right before the explosion occurred some of the deadly gas dissolved into the bubbling liquid in the cauldron. As the liquid super heated, it fused the smell into the very soul of Voldemort as it steamed the infant to death. The piece of Voldemort's soul that had been in the body reached out to the horcruxes to preserve its connection to the physical world.

In a bank vault on the lowest level of Gringotts a screaming black vapor pours out of a small golden cup with a badger on it and the smell that accompanied the vapor quickly filled the chamber. Sixty years in the future when Bellatrix Lestrange was finally released from Azkaban, her first stop was Gringotts to fill her money bags from her vault. As she opened the door and walked into the vault, the smell that had lingered for sixty years overcame her weakened state. Since she hadn't had time to cast the counter curse to the

Germino and Flagrante Curses when she stumbled into a pile of her treasure and collapsed, the treasure multiplied and burned until nothing was left but a badly burned corpse. The Goblin who had accompanied her quickly shut the vault to prevent the smell from escaping. Looking around to make sure no one else was watching he walked away quickly. Having the wealthy but insane witch die while he was accompanying her wouldn't look good on his record.

At number Twelve Grimmauld Place a locket burst open screaming as a black vapor poured out of it. As the screams died down, the smell that had accompanied the vapor out of the piece of jewelry quickly filled the Ancient and Noble house of Black until the whole residence smelled of rotten corpses. A small house-elf rushed into the room where the locket was located and upon seeing the quest his master had given him many years in the past was completed, his mind cleared and he picked up the locket and placed it around his neck. Then he went in search of the last of the Blacks.

In a shack near the graveyard, a ring hidden under the floorboard suddenly spewed forth a screaming black cloud along with the smell of a thousand rotting corpses. Unfortunately for a certain Headmaster, the compulsion and withering curse that also were on the ring were not affected. A little more than a year in the future Albus Dumbledore still discovered the ring as he searched for the Hallow he desperately wanted. He still placed the ring on his finger and the curse started withering his arm away.

The Room of Requirements had two horcruxes at this moment. In a vast storage area, a thousand year old diadem emitted a black cloud that screamed in anguish as the large cavernous room filled with an obnoxious smell. A couple of weeks later Professor Trelawney stumbled into the room carrying twenty empty bottles of cooking sherry. She lapsed into unconsciousness as the smell overcame her. House-elves found her a couple of days later but the smell had permanently imbibed itself into her very skin by then. The perfume smell in her classroom had to be increased by several factors to cover the smell. Divinations quickly became a subject no one volunteered to take.

The last horcrux was imbedded in the scar and soul of Harry James Potter. At the time the living part of Voldemort's soul tried to make a connection to its last Horcrux, said person was lying on his back while the love of his life was sitting on top of him displaying a more

physical aspect of their love. His scar immediately burned more deeply than it ever had before. Harry could feel the consciousness of Voldemort trying to push its way into his mind.

"You're my last Horcrux Harry Potter and I will have your body as well." He heard a voice in his head.

"Her...mione." Harry gasped through the pain as he struggled against the possession. "It...its Vol...Voldemort. He's trying to poss....possess me. I...I can feel him trying to feel me with....with....hate."

Hermione looked at her boyfriend and could see his eyes turning pinkish. She could see his face contorted as he mentally took on Voldemort. "HATE? I'll help him fight it with love." She thought determinedly. Instead of stopping what she was doing she increased her pace and laid down on her boyfriend's chest. Between kisses she said "Fight it Harry. I love you and you promised to always love me." Tears ran down Hermione's face as she watched her love in pain fighting for his soul. "You can't love me if you're filled with hate." She could see the determination of her boyfriend as he fought. "Think of our future Harry." She said as she continued showing him as much love as she could. "You promised me WE would have children, WE would have a family REMEMBER!"

Hermione's love along with the thought of a family with children with her poured through Harry's soul. A golden light flared deep inside of Harry's mind and as it contacted the blackness that was Voldemort it overcame it reducing it into nothingness.

Harry's eyes flew open and his body started convulsing. If Hermione hadn't been so very concerned for her boyfriend she would have enjoyed his convulsions greatly. As it was she saw the redness in Harry's eyes fade as they returned to their brilliant green. Then she saw his scar split wide open and a black vapor and ooze pour out of it followed by a smell that was overpowering but somewhat familiar. Harry lapsed into unconsciousness and Hermione quickly grabbed for her wand (the wooden one, not the one attached to her boyfriend) and took care of the smell. She then collapsed next to Harry and held him for several minutes. When she had recovered enough she got dressed and after putting Harry's robes on him, she levitated her unconscious lover toward the hospital wing. Tears of

fear, tears of hope and tears of love all poured down her cheeks as she walked beside him.

Looking down upon the world, the Goddess of Fate looked at what happened and as she looked at the other gods around her she muttered. "Whoops!"

"WHOOOPS! What do you mean Whoops?" A very angry older God asked the smaller Fate. "All of the heavens have been working to put Harry Potter where he is because you predicted he was the one to kill Voldemort. We allowed his mother and father to die and for him to be abused all because of your prediction. We allowed him to be manipulated by the senile old puke because of what you predicted."

Fate shrunk into herself a little. "Well..uh..How was I supposed to know it was polyjuice potion." She pointed to her scrying pool. "It only shows pictures. I clearly saw Harry Potter do some kind of magic that totally destroyed Voldemort and his horcruxes."

"Yet now we have an idiot who farted responsible? " The Elder God who had many names like Zeus, Jupiter and the one true god looked around and quickly made up his mind. "Damage control people. We'll be the laughing stock of the multi universes if this gets out." All of the lesser gods quickly came into play. Coincidences were forced, questions put on people's minds and others removed. All major disasters were put on hold as the Gods worked through the crisis.

Fate tried a little recovery. "Well it was that final battle that killed Voldemort...so really it was Harry." She saw the Elder God still wasn't very happy. "And it was love...really was love that killed him. It might not have happened as I saw it but it still happened."

The Elder God sighed as he turned and walked away shaking his mighty head. "Some eternities are just not worth getting up for." He thought.

Back in the Graveyard the Aurors appeared and immediately fell to the ground retching. "Merlin." Tonks cried through gasping breaths of air. "What is that bloody smell?"

"Don't know." Came an equally gasping but much deeper voice of Shacklebolt. "Bubbleheads on immediately though. This stuff might

be deadly." Once the protective bubbles of air were in place he motioned for everyone to spread out and start searching for clues to what had caused the magical disturbance. Shacklebolt saw a smoking something several hundred feet away and walked over to investigate. What he found was an unconscious Peter Pettigrew. He immediately recognized a man who was supposed to be dead for over thirteen years. Knowing something was wrong he put magic suppression cuffs on the man and levitated him back to the graveyard.

Tonks had also seen a smoking heap about fifty feet away and quickly found the unconscious body of Harry Potter still tied to some kind of Tombstone. She immediately indicated they needed to drop the bubbleheads to talk. "I've got Harry Potter over here."

"What? Potter? HERE?"

The third Auror of the group was older, he had fought in the previous war and was poking around the Cauldron and found the flat faced red eyed snake looking infant. Looking around and seeing the other two without bubbleheads he dropped his own and shouted "Guys, I think this is You-Know-Who."

"WHO?"

"You-know..well you know He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named."

"Oh!"

The older Auror noticed a wand lying beside the Cauldron. "This is definitely You-Know-Who's wand." He yelled.

"Who's wand?"

"You-Kn..." The Auror slapped his head in frustration before yelling. "Bad guy's wand."

"Tonks go get Dumbledore out here." Shacklebolt said. "We need answers and hopefully he has them. We've got Harry Potter, a man who is supposed to be dead for the last thirteen years and the possible body...er..something of Voldemort."

"Do...do you think Potter killed him again?" Tonks asked looking at the unconscious boy with raven color hair and the infamous lightning bolt scar.

"Well this thing is definitely dead." Shacklebolt said looking at the infant thingy. "If this is him, then yes it looks like it happened again. But this time we have a body."

It took a few minutes of refusing Lemon drops but Tonks was finally able to convince the ancient headmaster of the need for his services before the trophy was handed out. Fudge hearing something serious was happening joined them in the trip back to the graveyard.

Dumbledore seeing the name on the tombstone confirmed the evil infant thingy was in fact Voldemort and then he looked at the body of Harry Potter. "Poor soul. He never had a chance for a life." He said.

"Uh...sir...He's not dead." Shacklebolt mentioned.

"Of course he is." Dumbledore replied. "They just don't know the prophecy."

"No he's not. He's still breathing."

"Well I'm sure it's just a matter of time then." Dumbledore replied. He turned to the large Auror "Lemon drop?"

Shacklebolt immediately turned to Tonks. "Take Potter to St. Mungos...wait...Hogwart's medical wing might be best. I think Pomfrey knows Mr. Potter medical history best."

"Yes sir."

"Please let me know when he finally dies." Dumbledore called after her as she took Ron and apparated outside of Hogwarts. She quickly rushed the boy to the Hospital wing.

"Order of Merlin first class obviously." Fudge said to Dumbledore.

"Yes definitely." Dumbledore replied. "I guess once he dies you can give it to his girlfriend. They have been really close. Lemon drop?" He casually offered the Minister.

Madam Pomfrey was near the Quidditch field where she had set up a medical tent expecting injuries from the Champions. Both glad her service weren't needed and frustrated at the stupidity of the event itself, she was busy packing up all the potions and other medical instruments she thought she was going to need. When Tonks couldn't find her in the medical wing she placed Ron (still looking like Harry) in one of the bed. She looked kindly at the young hero. She gently removed his glasses and placed them on the table that was between his and another bed. After another warm gaze at raven haired young man the world owed so much too, she left to find Madam Pomfrey.

Shortly after Tonks left the hospital wing the polyjuice potion wore off leaving Ron lying in the bed. A short time later Hermione entered levitating Harry into the Hospital. When she couldn't find Madam Pomfrey either she carefully put the love of her life in a bed. As she turned to go find the school nurse she noticed who occupied the joining bed. "Wonder what happened to him?" Briefly crossed her mind but Harry was much more important.

Tonks was the first to find Pomfrey and soon she was telling her about finding the young man in the graveyard and finding the dead body of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named nearby as they rushed back to the medical wing. When she got to the young man's side she noticed the scar was ripped open and some kind of black ooze was pouring out of it. Several potions later and Harry was fully recovered. He even found his glasses lying on the table next to his bed. That was how Hermione found him. She had searched the grounds for the nurse and unable to find her had returned to the hospital wing only to find she had returned in Hermione's absence and healed her boyfriend.

Molly finally found her son in the Hospital wing. Nobody knew how he got there. Nothing Madam Pomfrey tried would bring him around until four days later. Pomfrey assured the Weasley Matriarch and the rest of the Weasley clan that she could find no permanent harm in the young man except a very unusual and horrible smell. She promised she would keep trying to awaken the young man and let them know when she was successful. While he was unconscious the school year ended with final testing and the contract he had signed many months earlier expired.

Wormtail bargained for a lifetime in Azkaban instead of the Dementor's kiss by fully confessing. He admitted that he had betrayed the Potters and Sirius was innocent, he admitted he was trying to bring Voldemort back and he told the tale of the graveyard even supplying the memories of it. Everyone saw what appeared to be Harry Potter performing the most amazing wandless magic that caused the entire area to explode in flames. The Daily Prophet ran articles proclaiming the end of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named at the hands of Harry Potter for good. They even had pictures of the Evil Villain baby body. Wormtail himself was put in the cell next to Bellatrix shortly after Malfoy had left. She still had no clothes on and he was forced to see her every day like that for the next sixty years. He was quite sure he got the worst end of the bargain and begged to be kissed. Though every time cried out to be kissed Bellatrix offered her own lips.

Shortly after the event Harry described his own battle for his soul with Dumbledore. Leaving out the parts of having sex at the time, he described Voldemort's saying he was the last Horcrux and how he fought for his soul and won.

"The last Horcrux?" Dumbledore thought. "So sad Harry will now die." He turned to his student. "Well when you're dead Harry I'll make sure the world knows of your great sacrifice." He said serenely.

"Dead?"

"Yes there was a prophecy concerning you." Dumbledore replied.

"And what did the prophecy say?"

"Oh you're much too young to know that Harry. I just want you to have a normal life."

"But..but..you're saying it's already done right?"

"Yes."

"Then why can't I know what it said?" Harry asked.

"Because you're much too young to know, and I just want you to have a normal life." Dumbledore repeated then leaning over with a bowl of yellow candy. "Lemon drop?"

"Uh no sir." Harry replied beginning to wonder about the sanity of the person he was speaking to.

"That's too bad. They're quite delicious. Now we have to discuss you going back to your relative this summer. I'm sure it will only be a short time since you'll be dead soon enough."

"But I heard Wormtail confessed and Sirius is free." Harry said. "He'll want me to come live with him."

"Yes, but you're safer with your Aunt, that is until you die."

"But Voldemort's dead."

"There are all kinds of dangers Harry. Just this morning I tripped on a step and opened a cut on my knee." Dumbledore started to lift his robes to show the knee in question.

Harry gave one last look at the Headmaster and bolted from his office.

Harry and Hermione of course denied the whole story of Harry being anywhere near a graveyard but when they were unwilling to say what they had been doing at that time or provide memories, everyone proclaimed it was Potter's usual unselfishness and self sacrifice. Rita Skeeter ran her article of being saved from Acromantulas by Harry at Christmas time. Since Harry never told her how many he actually had to kill to save her, she presume it was at least four of them and wrote the story as such. She interviewed Daphne Greengrass and Tracey Davies who both swore that they had seen Harry Potter perform wandless magic before. That lead to even more credence to what happened in the graveyard. Story after story piled up in the Prophet. The more Harry denied the events ever occurred the more praise was heaped upon him for his nobleness. Then Ron Weasley woke up.

Ron immediately started proclaiming how You-know-Who had imprisoned him in a graveyard and started a rambling of fighting the Dark Lord with a sword until he lopped his head off. When people started laughing at him because Pettigrew had produced memories of exactly what happened, Ron started to tell the truth. But since Ron couldn't tell anyone how he got to the graveyard and how he

came to look like Harry Potter people laughed at his story. When he was able to give exact descriptions of what had happened, people presumed he had read the daily prophet articles describing the scene but enough doubt was entered into the public's mind for Cornelius Fudge to open a public interview of Ron Weasley to put the issue to rest. With Harry and Hermione constantly denying Harry had anything to do with it and was denying all interviews it was something Fudge felt was necessary.

In the largest courtroom at the Ministry, every seat was packed as Ronald Weasley took the chair and waited for the questioning so he could prove his claim. Fudge looked down at the red-haired young man and opened with the first question. "Mr. Weasley, you claim you were the one who killed You-Know-Who on June Twenty-Fourth. Can you tell the courtroom exactly how you killed him?"

"Uh...I..I farted and he blew up." Ron answered honestly. The interview and investigation ended at that moment as the entire courtroom exploded in laughter. Harry and Hermione had attended the interview in hopes of supporting their old friend, but as the laughter continued minute after minute Ron Weasley snapped. He charged at his old friends with fists raised, causing Harry to respond with a stunning spell before he could hurt Hermione. More articles appeared about the young man defending his lady and the legend grew larger and the ridicule of the youngest male Weasley continued.

Ron was found to be insane and put in confinement at St. Mungos. When Harry and Hermione stopped there to visit him a couple of weeks later it was advised that the visit might be very unhelpful to his eventual recovery. When they questioned what would cause such an answer a nurse led them to a window to Ron's room of confinement where they could see in but he could not see out.

"When he first got here, there was a bottle of ink and a quill in his room." The nurse explained quietly. "And well this is what happened." She motioned toward the window.

Harry and Hermione looked through the opening. Ron had emptied the bottle of ink into his hair turning it completely black and had scratched a lightning bolt onto his forehead with the quill. He was sitting in the corner of the room murmuring over and over.

"I'm Harry Potter...I'm Harry Potter...I Killed You-Know-Who..I'm Harry...."

In another show of Unity the three Triwizard Champions donated the winnings they had split to St. Mungos to help in the care of Ron.

One of the most intriguing side effects of the death of Voldemort was his marked followers. The Dark Mark connected the follower to their master via Voldemort's soul magic. The smell that had joined into his soul immediately before his death was sent over the connections to that mark. Each marked Death Eater might have been able to hide his tattoo under his robes, but the smell that followed them everywhere they went made sure everyone knew who they were. No additional charges could be brought against them, but they became social outcasts when no one would invite them into their homes. Even their owls refused to return after a while. Wives divorced the Death Eater husbands and the courts were merciless in giving all the properties to them. Most of those wives followed Narcissa Black's example and started enjoying the more pleasant aspects of life.

Severus Snape was one of those marked men. Because of the smell he carried with him for the rest of his life, he was forced to give up his classroom. He opened a small apothecary shop that specialized in extremely difficult potions. The orders were filled by mail owl as the Potions Master had been fortunate to stumble upon an owl that had lost its sense of smell. No one ever saw him again, they just knew he existed. He died eighty-nine years of complete solitude later.

June twenty-fourth was made Harry Potter day and celebrated throughout the magical world.

All charges were dropped against Sirius Black and since he never was formally charged or convicted his record was completely clean. He was reinstated at full rank and seniority in the Aurors. He received his full back pay including all the overtime computed as if he was working twenty-four hours a day for the last thirteen years. He even got a bonus for showing a weakness in the defenses of Azkaban prison. Once the deed to Malfoy Manor was filed at the Ministry of Magic, he had the name officially changed to Marauders Mansion. Remus Lupin took up residence there as well. Kreacher

found the last Black after several days of searching and joined the household.

Sirius blocked Dumbledore's efforts to send Harry back to the Dursleys and in enforcing the Potter's will, he took up guardianship. The Dursley's were extremely happy with the freak being gone. They never made the connection to Harry departing and the horrible streak of luck they encountered over the next couple of years that finally left them bankrupt and Vernon out of a job. It was a classroom demonstration of exactly how magic can be used without it being known. Something the Marauders were very adept at.

Dumbledore continued to patiently wait for Harry to die as he knew it would happen any day. He eventually found the ring Hallow buried in the floor of the old shack and his arm had started to wither, since Severus Snape was no longer in the castle he had no one to help him. The withering curse spread throughout his body and he slumped over his desk dead a short time later. His body completely black and dried up. He wasn't found for two weeks.

Neville and Ginny stayed together and eventually married. They were close friends with the Potters. Ginny got over her crush on Harry when she found out what true love really was.

Harry and Hermione spent the summer together. Either at Marauders Mansion or at the Grangers residence or during the trip through Europe they were always together. On their return to school the next year they were both made Prefects which gave them many more opportunities to work their way through Harry's favorite book. When that book was found by Mrs. Granger in Hermione's book bag the summer after their fifth year, a long discussion took place between Mrs. Granger and Harry and Hermione. Fortunately she decided to spare Harry's life and not tell Mr. Granger until the following summer. By that time enough hints had been dropped to allow Richard Granger to accept the situation without actually killing the young man, but another dental exam was administered.

When Dumbledore was unable to secure a new Defense against the Arts teacher, the ministry stepped in and provided two Aurors for the job. Hogwarts was never the same once Sirius Black and Nymphadora Tonks spent two years teaching there as Co Professors. Tonks also took over as Slytherin's Head of House. With

her ability to morph into anyone, the subtle plans that were developed in the common room of the snake house were quickly defused and Slytherin was guided back into a respectable part of Hogwarts. When Sirius wanted to leave teaching behind and return to field Auror work, Harry decided to use his fame for the Greater Good and made a plea to the public to allow Remus Lupin to return to Hogwarts to take up the reins of DADA instructor once again. Those ex-students who remembered his brilliant lessons joined in and Remus was once again Professor Lupin. Tonks stayed on as Co-instructor. The two of them finally fell for each other and married just a year later. With the curse of the DADA broken, they spent many years teaching together and raising their two children in the halls of Hogwarts.

During their seventh year Harry and Hermione were made Head Boy and Girl by Headmistress McGonagall. A unique opportunity opened up for them that year. A French book collector heard of Harry's parselmouth abilities and offered him a substantial amount of money to help translate several parceltongue books into a readable language. Harry and Hermione worked on the project together. As the word spread, offers from all over the world poured in for help from collectors and libraries to do similar translations. When they left Hogwarts after their seventh year, they spent the next six years responding to those offers. They traveled the world and visited all the renowned magical libraries. Of course one of the conditions always put down in any contract they took was for Hermione to have unlimited access to the entire library they were working at. With Harry being the only parselmouth remaining in the world, he commanded huge amounts of galleons for his work and no condition he put forth was rejected. Two other conditions were also always required, one was that if the work was deemed for dark purposes only, Harry and Hermione would not complete the translation and the last was the two of them were to always be left alone in the library at least for one hour away from everyone else. No one knew that two of their three children were conceived during those times. All in all they made love in forty-seven different libraries.

Harry proposed to Hermione just a couple of months after leaving Hogwarts. Instead of being on a knee as he asked the question, he did it while Hermione was descending a library book ladder at the Magical Library of Paris. He thought it was the perfect way and place to propose to his Mione. She agreed and of course said yes. The two of them married less than a year later and were surprised

and shocked when Sirius handed them the deed to Marauders Mansion. He told them that it was the only reason he bought it in the first place. Harry insisted that Sirius take some of the land and build his own house which he did.

Sirius settled down several years afterwards with a lovely muggleborn witch. He told everyone that would listen that he only picked her because he knew how much it would upset his mother. Of course anyone who saw the two together knew she had Sirius Black wrapped around her little finger and so did the little girl they had two years later.

When Fleur left Hogwarts following the Triwizard tournament she had friends for the first time in her life. She, Michelle and two other girls spent several weeks touring Germany. When the summer was over, she requested and was allowed to take an eighth year at Beauxbaton. Madam Maxine recognized the change that had occurred in the young lady and knew she needed time to come to terms to what it meant to her life. It was during that year she noticed a shy seventh year who occasionally glanced at her. When she asked friends about him, she found out the boy's name was Pierre and he liked Fleur but was too shy to approach her. She broke the ice between the two of them and developed a friendship which became more. Two years later the confident Pierre proposed to Fleur and as she looked at him, she remembered the much older red haired man from the Tri-Wizard tournament. "Pierre might not have an earring or wear dragonhide boots" she thought," but he has something the other man can never have. He has my heart." With tears of happiness in her eyes she answered yes to the man who loved her for who she was and not lusted for what she was.

THE END

Though this is marked complete I do have plans to come back and possibly add an Omake or two for alternate endings to Voldemort so don't remove your alerts just yet. Though with over 25000 words written in the last two weeks I need a serious break from this story. Don't expect those Omakes very soon.

I stopped asking for reviews a long time ago because I got annoyed when other authors started holding chapters hostage for reviews. But this time I will make this one request. If you've enjoyed the story, just hit the review and say good story or something else. Did I make

you feel sorry for Ron? Was it a decent ending for Harry and Hermione? Fleur? Were you happy how the characters fared in their lives?

I would love to get to 2500 reviews for the story. If not, I'm not complaining. I just hope everyone has enjoyed the story.

Disclaimer: Still do not own Harry Potter. I did take some direct verbiage from Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire for this chapter.

A/N: Alternate ending for this story.

Ok, this ending sounded funny when I thought of it, but now that I've written it, not so much. But I'm posting it anyway because there are a couple of funny moments.

The following occurred a few days after Harry and Hermione started having fun in the Room of Requirements.

As Voldemort slowly recovered from another night of agonizing joy and happiness as Harry Potter and his mudblood shagged once more, he knew he had to do something or the body he now had would expire from the suffering long before he was to be resurrected by Potter's blood. Long deep breaths finally allowed him to regain some control over the shakes that still coursed through his body. By drawing on his Occulemency and Legilimency, he started to tentatively explore the connection he shared with the Boy-Who-Lived. It was a slow process as Voldemort feared what might happen if he were hit by another happiness blast while his mind was actively exploring the connection. Soon he had his answer though.

"A part of my soul?" Riddle thought. "In Potter's mind? How can that be?"

Tom Riddle, being the ultra brilliant super villain quickly figured out what had happened that night all those years ago when he had tried to kill the child. As he sat in his Evil Villain Restoration Module, he contemplated this discovery. He feared that Potter might be able to use the connection to discover his plans or discover his servant at Hogwarts. He turned to his faithful...err available follower. "Wormtail, I need a book."

"Yes My Lord." Wormtail replied. "Shall it be 'The Hobbit' again?" He asked as he reached for the well worn book.

"No." The Dark Lord thingy said, but then reconsidered since he seemed to be drawn to stories about little people. "Well maybe later, but right now I need you to find a copy of Problematic Potions of the Past for me."

"Yes My Lord." Wormtail replied and hurried off.

"POTIONS!" Voldemort screamed a while later after Wormtail handed him a book. "PROBLEMATIC POTIONS OF THE PAST YOU IMBECILE! NOT PROBLEMATIC PETUNIAS OF PERU! Can't you do anything right? CRUCIO CRUCIO CRUCIO!"

The faithful...err available Death Eater was finally able to retrieve the correct book after only two more tries.

Voldemort flipped through the pages of the book to a section near the end. His fingers ran down the page of 'Purgatorial Purification Panacea.' A potion guaranteed to remove all darkness from a body.

"Let's see unicorn saliva from a sick unicorn, sunflower petals picked at noon, ground tooth of a snow leopard, blood of a magical virgin of at least thirty years of age...the saliva, tooth and petals aren't a problem but it could take me forever to find a thirty year old virgin..." Voldemort murmured to himself. His eyes left the page as he watched Wormtail for a few seconds. "Well it doesn't say it had to be a female virgin...Wormtail I'm going to need some of your blood."

It took a week but finally Voldemort coached the faithful...err available servant into making the potion correctly.

As Tom Riddle eyed the setting sun nervously he turned to Wormtail and handed him the small bottle of potion. "Get this to Crouch immediately and tell him Potter must take it....AAAAARRRRRGGGHHHH" Voldemort finished with a scream as an all too familiar pleasant sensation came over him. Though the pain he complained. "It's too early...What did they do? Skip dinner? DAMN YOU POTTER AND YOUR VIRILITY!" His eyes rolled into the back of his head once again as he collapsed in his play...Psychopathic Entity Net Enclosed Lair.

Barty Crouch Jr. eyed the vial of golden brown liquid that had been delivered to him along with the instructions to insure Harry Potter consumed it as quickly as possible. He let out a sigh of relief that he had read the instructions. It looked very much like Firewhiskey and Crouch had almost chugged the vial as soon as he saw it.

"Potter." Crouch Jr. said to the Boy-Who-Lived-But-Would-Soon-Die-At-The-Hands-Of-His-Master as Defense class ended that day.

"Yes sir?" Harry asked.

"You looked tired today." Crouch said.

"Sorry sir, not been getting much sleep recently." Harry replied as he looked over at his girlfriend who was hiding her blushing grin behind her books.

"Well we can't have you falling down the steps and killing yourself, can we?" Moody asked as he reached into his desk and pulled out the bottle of golden brown liquid. "Here, take this modified pepper-up potion. It's something Aurors keep on themselves to get through those busy nights."

"Yes sir. Thank you sir." Harry replied as he eyed the liquid. "Maybe with this I can go five or six times tonight." He thought as he looked again at his beautiful but still blushing girlfriend. He quickly pulled the stopper and downed the liquid.

Harry and Hermione were half way down the steps to the Great Hall when the potion kicked in. Harry swayed as he grabbed hold of the railing.

"What's wrong?" Hermione asked worried.

"Nothing." Harry replied though it felt like someone had just punched him violently in the stomach.

"You don't look good Harry." Hermione said in a worried voice. "We need to get you to Madam Pomfrey."

"Really I...I'm fine." Harry stated as a burning sensation coursed through his body. He took a couple of steps down.

"You're not trying to...Harry your eyes...you have Black tears in them."

"I really am fine." Harry gritted out. "Let's go eat something." A serious wave of nausea rolled over him and he gave a few dry heaves.

"Harry you really need to go to the medical wing."

"It's nothing Hermione." Harry whispered through the pain that felt like Snape was boiling him alive in a potion.

"If you don't go see Madam Pomfrey right this instant, we will not be in the Room of Requirements for the next two weeks." Hermione said in her best bossy tone.

Harry's black teared eyes flew open as he swallowed another bile flavored saliva burst when his scar seemed to fill with lava. "Fine." He gasped through the coursing pain. "But I'm sure it's nothing."

"Hmmp." Hermione Hmmp'd. Then taking her boyfriend by the arm she guided him toward the medical wing.

"Mr. Potter?" Madam Pomfrey asked as the two students walked into the medical wing. Though it was more like Hermione half carrying Harry who was still insisting that nothing was wrong.

"I think he's got something serious." Hermione said as she guided her boyfriend to a bed.

"Nothing...but...but a...small stomach...ache." Harry grunted through gritted teeth as the pain was getting worse.

Poppy's wand was already waving over the young man's body. Soon she was looking at a parchment and muttering. "I've never seen anything like this, but it seems..oh..." Harry's scar ripped open and more black ooze poured from it along with a whistling sound that almost sounded like a scream.

Harry's body seemed to relax and he looked up into Hermione's beautiful eyes. "See nothing but a stomach ache." He said as the pain left his body. "Can we go now?"

Hermione rolled her eyes at her boyfriend and just shook her head.

Each night for the next week Voldemort eyed the setting sun nervously, but as each night came and went without the nerve racking pain from returning he breathed a sigh of relief. He chanced his Occulemency and Legilimency again and discovered the link with Potter had been severed. With a sigh of relief he sunk into his favorite daydream of watching the Boy-Who-Lived die.

%%%%%%%% %%%%%%%%%

(A/N Everything else happens the same. We pick the story back up with Ron looking like Harry waking up tied to the Tombstone. Of course now Harry is no longer a Horcrux.)

From Chapter 15. -Ron heard a noise at his feet and when he looked down he saw a gigantic snake slithering through the grass, circling the headstone where he was tied. Right before passing out in fear his last thoughts were, "Why does Harry Potter always get the easy ones?"-

Slowly consciousness returned to Ron. He was glad because the nightmare he'd had was the worst one since he'd eaten four of his mum's chocolate cakes when he had been eight. As his eyes fluttered open the first thing he realized was that the nightmare had been real. Terror overtook him and he fainted again.

"Revive him again." Voldemort commanded.

"Again." Voldemort commanded thirty seconds later after the great Harry Potter had fainted yet again.

"Again." A minute later.

"Make him take that pepper-up potion this time." Voldemort suggested as Potter slumped unconscious against the ropes once more. "I want him awake for this."

Wormtail forced the liquid into Ron's mouth. Unfortunately for Ron Weasley, anything entering his mouth is immediately swallowed, even when he's unconscious. The next time Ron was revived, as much terror as he felt, his body refused to slip back into blissful unconsciousness.

"Harry Potter." Voldemort said softly in a deadly cold voice when Wormtail picked him up and held him at Harry's eye level. "Do you know who I am?"

"mmmmmmbbmm." Ron uttered through the gag in his mouth as he shook his head.

"No...well I'll give you a hint." Riddle said. "It's been three years since you banished me from Quirrell. Remembered now?"

"Quirrell?" Ron. "But...but that means." Ron thought. Pepper-up potion or no potion Ron's terror eclipsed it and he slumped again unconsciousness as a large wet spot developed in the front of his robes along with a odor suggesting vacated bowels.

"Fine already." Voldemort whined. "Wormtail, he is ruining my great resurrection. Just do the ritual and then at least I can torture him."

"Yes My Lord." Wormtail replied and placed the babyish thing into the Cauldron.

"Bone of the father, unknowingly given, you will renew your son!"

"Flesh of the servant w-willingly given you will revive your master. "

As Wormtail walked toward the tombstone to take Harry's blood he noticed something. "Is his hair getting lighter? Must be a trick of the firelight." He thought as he made the cut and took the blood from Harry's arm.

"B-blood of the enemy forcibly taken you will resurrect your foe." He said as he poured the blood into the cauldron. Instantly the liquid turned blinding grey in color. Wormtail swallowed nervously as he remembered the ritual was suppose to have a white light. He didn't dare even think of what might have gone wrong. What he didn't realize was taking blood from an unconscious person does not constitute forcibly taken. The altered ritual allowed more of the traits of the blood giver to pass into the body of the resurrected person.

The light died down and from the greyish white mist that flowed from the liquid, a figure arose. The evilest Dark Lord to ever rise from a cauldron didn't realize a mistake had been made as his eyes took a few seconds to adjust to any light. "Robe me." He commanded his servant. "And find me some food. Food? Why did I ask for food?" He wondered but could not say anything because it would be a sign of weakness.

"Yes My Lord." Wormtail said as he assisted his master into the robes that laid at his feet. "But..." he help up the stump of his arm where he had cut off his hand when it was done.

"Ah yes I do need to do that don't I?" Voldemort said grabbed Wormtail's other arm and pressed a finger to the red tattoo that was there. Peter sunk to his knees as the pain coursed through his body. Riddle then looked over at the unconscious form of Harry Potter still tied to the tombstone. "He can wait until my faithful followers are here." Through it all he did not notice the black hair now had a reddish tint.

"Master." Wormtail gasped as he still held out his hand. "You promised...you promised."

"So?" Voldemort sneered. "But if he dies, who will make you food?" A nagging voice interrupted his thoughts. "Food again? Well I have been on a snake venom diet for months. A nice snack would go down very well." He looked at Pettigrew. "Fine." He reached into his pocket and withdrew his wand. He stared at the stump for a few seconds. When he had promised Wormtail a new hand, he had envisioned a silver super strong one with protection charms, but now he reconsidered. "Why should I give him a better hand than I have?" He thought. With a wave of his wand a wooden hand formed at the end of wormtail's arm.

"Thank you My Lord... Thank..." Wormtail's thankfulness ended as he saw what he now had for a hand.

"Now go find me some food Wormtail." The Dark Lord said. As Pettigrew turned and started out of the graveyard he called again. "And find out the latest Quidditch results."

"Quidditch?" Voldemort asked himself. He didn't have time to ponder the question to himself as the air was suddenly full of the swishing of cloaks. Between graves, behind the yew tree, in every shadowy space, wizards were Apparating. All of them were hooded and masked. And one by one they moved forward . . . slowly, cautiously, as though they could hardly believe their eyes Voldemort stood in silence, waiting for them. Then one of the Death Eaters fell to his knees, crawled toward Voldemort and kissed the hem of his black robes.

"Master...Master." The Death Eater said.

Several of the Death Eaters were staring at their lord and master strangely, but when Voldemort looked at them, they glanced away or at the ground. Finally the Darkest of Dark Lords started pacing in front of his Death Eaters. "You might wonder how this was possible. How I came to be alive and in front of you. It is thanks to our guest of honor." He threw a finger over his shoulder at his father's tombstone. "Harry Potter." He whispered softly.

Now several of the Death Eaters were looking between him and his father's tombstone strangely.

"Potter?" One of the Death Eaters, who Riddle knew was Theodore Nott Sr.

"Of course Potter, my long time..." Voldemort's voice trailed off as he had turned to look at the boy he had triumphed over and found himself looking at a gangling, red headed boy tied to the tombstone where Harry Potter had been. He walked closer to him and noticed the blood that was seeping from a cut on the boy's arm. A scream of rage filled the graveyard and ten Death Eaters were dead and the rest were cowering for their lives before the Maniacal Snake Faced Dark Lord bled off his anger. As he stomped between graves trying to figure out what had gone wrong, several cracks could be heard as Aurors started appearing because of the Magical discharge in a muggle graveyard.

Shacklebolt was leading the team of ten Aurors. He was instantly on alert when he apparated into the Muggle area when he saw at least a dozen Death Eaters rushing him, behind them bodies of black robed individuals were scattered across the ground. But confusion overcame his whole team when the Death Eaters threw their wands at the Aurors and hid behind the Magical Policemen.

"He's CRAZY!" one of the silver masked people said as he pointed to the resurrected Dark Lord. "Save us!"

Voldemort knew he had to leave. Even he could not stand up to ten Aurors. With a turn he was gone.

While the Aurors were busy trying to question the Death Eaters and getting Ron Weasley freed from his captivity, a short balding man came wandering into the graveyard. He had a bag under his arm and wasn't paying attention to what was going on around him until

he was poked by no less than six wands. As he looked into the face of several Aurors he swallowed nervously and held up the bag. "Anyone hungry?"

The large snake they found slithering in the graveyard was captured and killed. No one could explain why a loud scream escaped from the dead reptile.

Confusion ranged throughout the magical world as the reports flowed out from the Aurors office. The confessions of Peter Pettigrew led to even more confusion as he swore it was Harry Potter in the graveyard. Finally someone stumbled upon the possibility of Polyjuice potion. With Wormtail's story about Crouch Jr and with several people remembered seeing Moody chasing after Potter the night it all happened, Moody's office was searched and the almost dead old Auror was found alive.

Pettigrew's confession also led to all charges being dropped against Sirius Black who immediately got custody of Harry Potter per the Potters' will.

Harry of course told every interviewer that he was nowhere near a graveyard and had left the pitch to spend time with his girlfriend.

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The Healers of St. Mungos finally managed to bring Ron Weasley around several days later. Since the Ministry wasn't releasing any details about that night, Ron embellished the facts a very small amount. He claimed it was he who had killed the ten Death Eaters in a desperate struggle for freedom. He'd only been subdued when Voldemort had gotten lucky with a binding charm When Ron had had his back turned finishing off the last two Death Eaters.

He became a national celebrity. His picture was plastered on every newspaper and periodical printed in the weeks to follow. As the weeks went on and no one refuted his story, it got larger and larger. He described over one hundred Death Eaters in the initial battle but most had fled when he'd went on a rampage.

The Flying Arrow Broom company was set to sign him to the largest endorsement contract ever when Rita Skeeter got her hands on the Auror reports and descriptions of Pettigrew's and the other Death

Eaters who were now in Azkaban memories. She smiled as she thought of the contract signing that was to occur the next day.

The entire executive board of the Flying Arrow Broom company was arranged around the large table in the middle of the Chudley Cannons' Quidditch pitch. The stadium was filled with people wanting to lay eyes on the Hero of the Graveyard.

Ronald Weasley was dressed in brand new robes as he sat in the middle of the table surround by a large contract. His eyes were glazed over as he kept looking at the number of zeros in the line that described the value of the contract and expected residuals.

"Before you begin." Rita spoke up once the introductions had been made. "Can we ask Mr. Weasley a few questions?"

"Oh certainly." The chief executive said.

The smile that passed over Rita's lips would have curdled milk. "Mr. Weasley how did you end up in the Graveyard to begin with?"

The investigators had told Ron that Crouch Jr. had portkeyed him there.

"It was that bogus Moody." Ron said. "I knew it all along of course, but I played along. Once I got to the graveyard I was ready."

"And that's when the fight started?"

"Yeah I was surrounded by You-Know-Who and all of his Death Eaters...hundreds of them." Ron exclaimed.

"And how many times did you faint?"

"Four I...uh I didn't faint." Ron suddenly looked nervous. "No, that was You-Know-Who that fainted..yeah once I'd killed two of his death eaters." He grabbed a goblet of water and chugged it down. Rita watched with glee on her face. She'd paid one of the people responsible for setting the table up to lace his water with veritaserum. Her initial question had just been to make him nervous enough to drink. She paused as she looked around at her cowriters. Then she saw the look she had been waiting for to pass in Weasley's eyes.

"How many Death Eaters did you kill?"

"I didn't kill any of them." Ron answered in a dull voice. The table of executives suddenly quieted from the congratulatory whispers and the stadium grew deathly quiet.

"None?" Rita said. "And you fainted how many times?"

"Four I think but I don't remember, I'm not sure if I ever was conscious long enough to faint again."

"Did you attack any Death Eaters?"

"I never saw any Death Eaters, it was only Pettigrew and a really really ugly baby who was You-Know-Who."

The rest of the reporters joined in then and the slaughter was on. To add insult to injury, as he slunk off the stage in total humiliation he brushed up against a table and a spider crawled onto his hand. The pictures of the resulting panic dance was in the leading story of the prophet the next day.

Ronald Weasley was famous from that day forward. His name was forever branded into the magical society. To be called a Ron Weasley was often the precursor to duels to the death from the insult.

Ron had snubbed Harry and Hermione when he thought he was finally going to be rich and famous with the endorsement contract. So when he returned to Hogwarts the next year, they avoided him. Without Hermione's help and by not studying at all during his fourth year, he didn't manage a single OWL. His wand was snapped and he was forced from the magical world. He ended up working as a errand boy for his squib accounting relative.

A month after Voldemort returned, Amelia Bones was discussing the latest crime spree with Rufus Scrimgeour her head of Aurors. "What do you make of this" She asked. "Thirty-seven different muggle fast food places hit over the last month. Killing curses dispatched all of the people there and all of the food and money taken."

"Strange." Scrimgeour replied. "But we also have this issue with the Murders in the Quidditch league. The pattern is obvious. All of the

players of the last three teams to beat the Chudley Cannons have ended up dead."

"No leads?"

"Several things point to You-Know-Who but why would he be doing it?"

"I don't know but we better call off the Quidditch season."

"I'll let the sports department know."

When Scrimgeour had departed Amelia sat back in her chair and tried to make sense of everything. If Voldemort was back as all the evidence seemed to indicate, then what was he doing?

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In his lair, Voldemort was beside himself. As he gnawed on another chicken leg from a place called KFC while staring at a chessboard he finally lost control of his temper. "I am the greatest Dark Lord in History and I'm reduced to this? I can't stop thinking about food, Chess or Quidditch. I don't even like Chess or Quidditch." He stopped his mental rant as he moved one of the chess pieces on the board and picked up another chicken leg. As he finally cornered and checkmated himself, a plan came to mind. "I can kill myself so I can be resurrected with the right blood." He pulled out his wand when as he eyes looked at the checkmated King a better plan formed. "No...I'll have Dumbledore kill me. That way when I arise again no one will believe he can protect them."

The Dark Lord's fingers drummed on his chair as he analyzed his plan. He didn't even realize he'd opened another bag and pulled out a piece of breaded fish. "What if Dumbledore knows about my..this fish is pretty good...my horcruxes?"

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Harry and Hermione had spent an enjoyable summer vacation and they were scheduled to go back to school in a couple of days. One of the last things they were to do was to go to the old Black ancestral home. With Dobby's and Winky's help they quickly

subdued the crazy elf in the house and started cleaning it. When Dobby picked up a gold locket, he got a strange look on his face.

"Bad magic." Dobby said. "This locket is filled with Bad Magic."

"What kind?" Harry asked.

"Dobby doesn't know, but Dobby's felt it before." The elf started thinking and then snapped his fingers and was gone. He was back within five minutes and he had a silver tiara in his hand. "This has the same type of magic."

Hermione took the diadem from Dobby and started looking at it. she too felt an uneasiness about it. She then noticed the inscription. "WIT BEYOND MEASURE IS MAN'S GREATEST TREASURE" She turned to Harry. "That's Ravenclaw's motto." She said.

"Let's take these to Dumbledore and see what he makes of them." Sirius suggested.

"We'll be there a couple of days." Hermione suggested.

"I don't want to hang onto these that long." Harry replied. "Let's get Dobby and Winky to take us."

"Ok." Hermione agreed. They put the two items in a bag and within seconds were standing in the Great Hall. As they started toward Dumbledore's office, Harry turned to his girlfriend.

"It's been a while, what about we go to the Room of Requirements and..."

"Now I know why you didn't want to wait two more days." Hermione replied, but it had been a while and she really did enjoy spending those moments...err...hours in Harry's bed. It wasn't long before they were in the Room of Requirements in bed.

A very large man walked slowly up the road from Hogsmeade pulling chocolates from his pocket and stuffing them into his mouth. Back in Hogsmeade he'd killed the owners of Honeydukes and stolen as much of their chocolates as he could fit in his pockets. Now the Dark Lord who looked like a snake who had eaten a football made his way through the gates of Hogwarts with a simple

unlocking command. Up the stairs he went until he was staring at a stone Gargoyle.

Voldemort spent several minutes trying to guess the password with no success, finally he reached into his pocket and pulled another piece of chocolate out and while he was eating it he said. "I love...the taste...of these...chocolate frogs." He looked up in surprise as the Gargoyle moved aside and allowed him to enter.

As he wallowed into the Headmaster's office, Dumbledore looked up and smiled. "Tom, long time. Have a seat. Lemon drop?" He pushed the bowl of yellow candy toward the Dark Lord.

Voldemort sat heavily in the chair across the desk and wiped his brow. "Don't mind if I do." He said and quickly ate every one of the lemon drops.

"I was hoping you'd stop by." Dumbledore said. "I even wore my red socks in case you did."

"Socks?" Riddle replied. "What does..."

"Oh come now Tom, it's just us. We're getting too old to beat around the bush." Dumbledore declared.

"What are you talking about?" Riddle questioned.

"Us of course. Ever since you created your Dark Mark I always knew it was a message to me." Albus replied serenely. "You knew I've always had a thing for bad Dark Lords. First it was Gellert, but now...now I'm all yours."

Tom Riddle swallowed hard as he contemplated the leader of the light. "No...uh I only came here to get you to kill me." He said finally.

"Nonsense Tom." Dumbledore said. "We both know why you're here." The wizened old wizard gave a seductive wink to the overweight Dark Lord.

Tom was out of his seat in an instant. "Look...I don't know anything about that, but I just want you to kill me. I've have really bad resurrection and want to just die now."

"You'd just come back for me." Dumbledore said as he stood up and took a step toward Riddle. "I know all about your horcruxes."

Voldemort started backing away. "No..I destroyed my horcruxes...see." He rummaged in the bag he carried and after digging out mountains of candy and food wrappers he pulled out a gold cup and a ring, both with holes in them. "The easiest ones to be found. No one will find that locket in the cave nor the Diadem hidden in the vast city of rubbish in that special room." He thought. "Kill me now and I'll be gone forever."

"Let's take this into my private bedroom Tom and discuss it further." Dumbledore said.

Riddle's wand was up in an instant. "AVADA KADAVRA"

Fawkes dove in front of the green light, his thoughts before he died to be reborn were. "I want to die too...you try being bonded to his guy lifetime after lifetime."

"Come now Tom, we shouldn't be fighting." Albus said. "I've always said love is the most powerful force."

Riddle turned and bolted from the room. At least as bolting as you can do when you weigh over forty stone. As he exited Dumbledore's office and started down the steps he came face to face with his arch nemesis, the Boy-Who-Lived himself.

"YOU!" Voldemort screamed. "This is all your fault." He raised his wand and "AVADA KADAVRA"

Harry did the only thing he could think of being in such a narrow staircase with the killing curse headed toward you. He threw the bag that contained the locket and the Diadem in the path of the curse. As it intersected the curse two distinct screams could be heard from the bag.

Voldemort stared at the bag and his eyes widened, but at the same moment he lost his footing. His first reaction was to reach out to the wall, but he was not used to this much weight and his wrist snapped from the pressure causing his wand to fall out of his hand. Gravity was the next thing to exert itself as the overbalanced Dark Lord plummeted down the rotating steps. Because the steps were

rotating upward to bring Harry and Hermione up, the descent went on for several minutes. By the time the body finally made it to the bottom the lifeless eyes of Voldemort was staring vacantly up at nothing.

When several of the professors arrived to explore what the disturbance was, they found Harry Potter standing over the dead body of Voldemort with his wand out. Even though he denied having anything to do with it, he was given full credit for the death of Voldemort.